THE ADVENTURES OF Miſs LUCY WATSON.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

Miſs LUCY WATSON.

A NOVEL.

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THE ADVENTURES OF Miſs LUCY WATSON.

LETTER I.

Miſs WATSON to Sir EDWARD MANSEL.

IT is not your wealth, Sir Edward, but your affection which I claim; the former I have no pretenſions to, nor care I about it; but the latter—let it not be the ſubject of my pen, but the ſweeteſt enjoyment of my mind. Why theſe preſents but none of your company! Oh! Sir Edward! theſe ſuſpicions—theſe riſing throbs of a faithful boſom ——whence come they? why are they not lulled to peace by a few words—ſuch as once—but down riſing grief, thy element's below!

Reproaches are the bane of love; why therefore do I uſe them? why not pocket your preſents, and be content with that part of you which half my ſex would be perfectly ſatisfied with? No: I did not yield to an unwary moment, under the impreſſion of ſuch ideas: Your coldneſs may paint me as an old-faſhioned piece of houſehold goods—but never ſhall it picture me as a mercenary wretch that does not deſpiſe the wealth of a man whoſe love ſhe has loſt. I return your jewels—I eſteem the giver, but I hate the ſentiment which cauſed the gift.

I ſhall be ſatisfied with plain dealing of any kind: Treat me with diſdain; tell me you care no longer for her who was once your darling—I will ſay you act like a man of honour who deſpiſes a falſhood, but who abhors prevarication. You loved me with the tenderneſs of affection, and was the true gentleman in all our intercourſe: I aſk not this; be but a man—as you loved with ardour—hate with that ſenſibility which is the prerogative of ſuperiour ſouls—but not with this wavering, doubtful, trifling politeneſs—this inſipid moderation—this unmanly irreſolution: Let me tell you 'tis beneath the ſcope of your mind, and the contempt of mine. I have given you my heart and all that a woman can beſtow; ſurely I may claim plain dealing—a peremptory Yes or No.

This

This conduct of yours, ſo injurious to my affection, is ill brooked by that pride which I am ſorry I poſſeſs, and which is ſo little conſiſtent with my ſituation. You treat me like the meaneſt of my ſex: I am not this; born and educated your equal, my guilty folly has ſunk me low indeed, compared with my ideas —but it has not deprived me of my nature— it has not rendered me the moſt deſpicable of my ſex to receive the ſtrokes of coldneſs and moderation from one hand, becauſe the other is filled with preſents.

I am above ſuch treatment, and I will ever return it with contempt: Give me your love or give me nothing: My heart ſhall ever meet yours with reſponſive tenderneſs, and if genuine love can be a treaſure, you ſhall poſſeſs one indeed—but for this wavering—this——but no more.

Suffer me to demand an abſolute anſwer with that firmneſs of mind which will ever accompany me in ſuch perplexities as your coldneſs involves me in—but which always forſakes me in thoſe moments of tenderneſs which too ſuſceptible minds feel to their wretchedneſs.

Adieu, SIR.

L. WATSON.

LETTER II.

Miſs WATSON to Miſs CHARLTON.

I Received my dear Kitty's letter, and read it with very different emotions: Your expreſſions in my favour gave me pain, becauſe I know how little I deſerve them, and your criticiſms on my late conduct—pleaſure, preciſely for the ſame reaſon—You ſee I am very free, malice can never ſay a ſevere thing of me, but my ſcrutinizing reflections even aggravate the aſſertion: Much leſs can the mild admonitions of friendſhip make me blind to the real extent of my own crimes——nevertheleſs, my deareſt, you have not, at leaſt in my opinion, hit off the truth; I am worſe than you make me, and at the ſame time not ſo bad. But to drop this diſagreeable ſubject, let me explain to you the irkſomeneſs of my preſent ſituation.

Sir Edward's affair with lady Mary Sion, I have great reaſon to believe begins to grow ſerious, which makes me exceedingly uneaſy, for if he is near marrying another woman my connections with him receives freſh guilt, and in my own opinion of a blacker hue than any I have fallen into yet: I am now very ſure he will never marry me, and if he engages himſelf to another lady with an intention of marrying

ing her, I can but be an obſtacle to both their happineſs, and, after his marriage, be completely infamous—which however I will never be. He made me a viſit yeſterday, and I very frankly told him of his new connection, and mentioned my reaſons for thinking he would ſoon be married: He was a little confuſed at firſt, and rather ambiguous, but preſently aſſured me of the falſity of it—that Lady Mary was a moſt diſagreeable woman to him, and that he indulged himſelf in the acquaintance, which gave riſe to ſuch reports, becauſe ſhe was a woman of diſtinction and in high faſhion—"an affair of "vanity," added he, "not love, I aſſure you." Sir Edward—replied I, in theſe affairs you ſhould deal with me honourably; what you have ſaid appears to me as nothing but evaſion: I have the greateſt reaſon to believe that you have a very near connection with Lady Mary.

On my life, my Lucy, not I—you wrong me greatly, you do indeed—but let us call another ſubject; have you ſeen the new opera?

This is not generous, Sir. Tell me that you are really engaged with another woman, and I will never trouble you farther; your marriage with a valuable one would even give me pleaſure, but I would never for a moment be a means of inſtilling ſuſpicions into the breaſt of an innocent woman; I will never divide even the attentions of a man, whoſe every thought ought to be placed, elſewhere.

Prithee, my deareſt, give not into theſe ſilly ſuſpicions—theſe melancholy ideas—prithee do not give me the vapours—you are ſo moral, ſo——

So inſipid—ſo tireſome—ſo diſagreeable!—that I'll leave you, Sir; ſeek gaiety and mirth with others, you will never meet it again with me.

You are not ſerious!

Not ſerious! yes, fixed as fate. If you have the dirty meanneſs to uſe nothing but prevarication and falſhood with me, I will judge by my own ideas, and act accordingly.

Heavens! my deareſt Lucy, you hurt me infinitely. By Jove I love you— and only you— nor will I ever ſpeak to Lady Mary——

Hold, Sir—do not imagine that jealouſy urges me to this—I am not ſo mean—ſpeak to her—love her—marry her—but deny it not to me: Tell me but the truth and I will never reproach you. Let me not a moment poſſeſs another's rights—nor wound a mind I know not.

Moſt amiable woman, your ideas are fiction. On my honour—

Ah! Sir Edward, make not too light of that ſacred word—pauſe for a moment—conſider.

I conſider nothing but my love; I am yours for ever.——

What am I to think of his profeſſions! He called for our dear little Lucy, and ſpent the day in a manner unuſual of late, he was eaſy and

and affectionate. Oh! that ſweet infant! my Kitty, could you but know how my heart bleeds when I behold her, you would pity me—indeed! I know not what to think of Sir Edward. I think he ſpeaks truth, and yet I have ſtrong ſuſpicions of the contrary—need I ſay more to prove myſelf completely miſerable.

I ſhall endeavour to gain a knowledge of the truth, and am determined to live not a moment longer with him after being certain that he is connected with another woman. Guilty as I have been to myſelf, I will not be ſo to others.

My reflections are already too much imbittered to add freſh gall to that which already makes me miſerable. Hated by my parents, abandoned by my relations, ſcarce a friend but yourſelf in the world, full of horrible ideas; juſt heaven, to what am I fallen! What inconſiſtent folly ever to enjoy one moment's happineſs! But was I entirely rational in this reſpect, I ſhould ſpeedily become the prey of thought. I am often eaſy, and ſometimes even chearful.

I think I did not tell you of the rencontre I had with my brother at the play; I was juſt going into the box when he paſſed me—he turned at me, his eyes full of contempt and fury—— "And what do you do here, ſtrumpet!" He was going on with ſome more brutality, but I ſtaid

not to hear it; I ſlunk away from the obſervance of thoſe around us, mortified at my own deſpicable ſtate, but full of contempt for his beaſtly treatment of me. I had not ſeen him of two years. He is going to be married, I hear, to a woman with ſeventy thouſand pounds: Heaven have mercy upon her! I think his *characteriſtic* may be eaſily gueſſed.

Farewell, my dear Kitty, you cannot oblige me more than in writing often.

Yours,
L. WATSON.

LETTER III.

Lady MARY SION to FRANCIS MONSON Eſq.

HEavens and earth, Frank, what luck! fourſcore guineas by this light! and in half an hour: I told Lady Picket 'pon honour next Thurſday: Sooner, but I was obliged to be out of town a few days: Now be punctual, or by heavens—but you are a man of honour, and ſo I drop the ſubject.

Tueſday evening I ſhall be at Richmond; be ſure you meet me.

You enquire about Sir Edward: Hang him, he is a very wretch, fit for no individual purpoſe but

but to turn into a king's rooks biſhops pawn: He is cheſs mad. I declare I believe he loves a check mate better than a kiſs of the fineſt woman in England. However, I think I have him ſure, cheſs mad as he is; paſſionately ſhall he be in love with me, or I am a very novice in the art: I haſten matters as faſt as poſſible, and my mother is as eager to clinch the affair as I can be; we both have our motives, and act accordingly. He ſighs much and wiſhes for the happy day; but there are ſo many delays, that I can name none preciſely, nor even a month; but depend upon me, no expedition will be loſt, ſo prithee no more of your hints—never fear for your money.

I am not abſolutely pleaſed with your account of his connection with that creature—not however, that I deſcend ſo low as to fear any compariſon with ſuch wretches, but it ſhows us there is a perſon who has a ſtrong intereſt in breaking the match; that's all: Now, Monſon, if thou wert but a man indeed!—If—if you would but be bold enough—to——pſhaw——what am I about—I cannot truſt thee.

* * *

Theſe ſpadil manil baſto and vole fingers are an admirable contrivance of yours—if your own: If not, thou wert a lucky dog to diſcover

it; and I thank thee for the inſtruction. Lady Harriot and myſelf put it in practice for the firſt time at Mrs. Groom's aſſembly. Until we were perfect in our leſſon, we did not care to attack any old ſtandards; but luckily a couple of young giddy things gave us ſuch on opportunity as we wiſhed for, and we fairly fleeced them: they have ſpirit and money—admirable materials for us to work upon. We then play'd off our artillery at other tables, and ſuch on the whole was our ſucceſs, that you need not meet me at Richmond. What apt ſcholars you have got!

* * *

A viſit from Sir Edward yeſterday morning. I had one quadrille table, which I believe put him a little off, for he was not *ſo much the thing*, as I expected: When the party were gone I had a mind to rally him a little.

Now, my dear Sir Edward, don't you think this quadrille has ſome charms as well as your cheſs. That moſt inſipid of all games!

My dear Lady Mary, let us ſit down with a couple of friends at quadrille ſome day or other, for three or four hours *entertainment.*

Oh! by all means—at any time, for entertainment alone; and not play for any thing. Do you think it will be very entertaining to you?

Play

Play for nothing! why that would be but tedious.

No ſuch tediouſneſs, however, is found at my game. Therefore do not condemn it ſo ſpeedily. I never felt an hour's regret for the money I loſt at cheſs.

You are the moſt moral man of faſhion that I know—but you muſt allow me to tell you, Sir Edward, there is very little taſte or ſpirit in ſuch inſipid motives. What can you think a large eſtate was deſigned for, but to give its poſſeſſor the pleaſures of the beau-monde. I have no doubt of giving you one day or other, a greater reliſh for them.

It will be very ſurpriſing if you do. As much as I admire your ladyſhip's taſte in general, I ſhall never follow it in love of play. But, madam, I have a trifle in my pocket, which you muſt allow a place in your toilete, in honour of the original. *(Pulling out a ſmall ſhagreen caſe, the ſize of a picture, and preſenting me with it.)*

I opened it, and what ſhould it preſent to my view but the miniature ſet in diamonds, of really a very pretty woman: I was ſo ſtruck with ſo provoking a circumſtance, that I had almoſt burſt forth, but ſmothering my anger, and forcing a ſmile, Upon my word, Sir Edward, very pretty indeed!

The painter has merit, madam: the colours are good.

Very handſome indeed!

'Tis a handſome picture.

And an original too!

Oh! dear—your ladyſhip is pleaſed to compliment.

To compliment, Sir Edward!—why—what—don't you—reckon it ſo, Sir?

Dear Lady Mary! This raillery is too much; it is indeed! As a picture, I think it has merit; but for——

But for the original, you think it has none—that muſt be affectation indeed. There is expreſſion indeed in theſe eyes—and the complexion is truely fine! and ſo you think it ugly? ha! ha!

If your ladyſhip thinks it otherwiſe, I am ſatisfied I aſſure you.

That is very ſtrange. What neceſſity is there for my thinking it handſome?

I forgot, madam—a woman of your Ladyſhip's underſtanding regards not the body—it is the mind alone, that is of importance—It does not become me to ſpeak of that—I wiſh with all my ſoul the *mind* was deſerving of your ladyſhip's good opinion.

Of my good opinion! and that too is requiſite, is it?

Surely, madam!

Upon my word, Sir Edward—*(forcing a ſlight laugh)* you are the moſt faſhionable man—this

is

is a propoſal in taſte, truely—but Sir, do you really mean—to———

My dear Lady Mary, you deal in croſs purpoſes———

Oh! Sir Edward, I always love to accommodate matters with every body—the faſhionable caſe you know—But I think—it would be as well to have us ſeparate———

Separate!

That I think would not be amiſs!

Very much ſo—your ladyſhip is very cruel.

Oh! Sir Edward, I would not be thought cruel. Perhaps you would like *(ſmiling)* to have us play at cheſs together?

That I aſſure you would give me great pleaſure. It would be highly entertaining to me.

And live together in perfect harmony and good terms!

Dear Madam! can you doubt it? that is the natural conſequence of affection.

Of affection!—then we are to be very affectionate too!

I proteſt your ladyſhip is—

No, Sir Edward—no more at preſent—I muſt conſider of your propoſal—It is—a—a—a faſhionable one, I ſuppoſe.

Faſhionable!—Nothing can be nearer my heart I aſſure you—be it faſhionable or not.

Mighty well, Sir Edward, we———

A knock at the door ſtopped us—and he taking his leave, gave me an opportunity of venting

ing

ing my rage to myſelf at ſuch an unparalleled piece of impudence. Did you ever know any thing equal to it? But give me the praiſe that is my due on keeping my temper ſo admirably. However, the wretch ſhall never imagine I care enough for him to make his amours diſagreeable to me: No—my pride will prevent that. This creature muſt be her I heard of before—you ſee the neceſſity of acting with reſolution towards her—Heavens, Monſon, can you not contrive ſome—ſome—but no more.

Adieu,

M. Sion.

LETTER IV.

Sir Edward Mansel to Francis Monson, Eſquire.

INdeed, my friend, you are greatly miſtaken; ſo far from being yet deſperately in love with my miſtreſs, I am grown even more in love than I could ever have thought I ſhould have been with her ladyſhip—or to deal plainly with you, I am grown more tired of my miſtreſs. For notwithſtanding this circumſtance, ſo favourable to my honourable flame; yet ſhe owes her advantages not to her own merit, but the

vacancy of my affections. There is a moſt curſed weakneſs in this ſilly trifling emptineſs of the human heart, that it muſt have recourſe to a ſucceſſion of what we call objects of love, for filling up the inanity of reflection: for, moſt certainly, if a man had a plentiful fund for reflection, he could better employ himſelf than by love.

Since that firſt rage and ardency of affection for my miſtreſs has worn off a little; I have given way to reflection, and it tells me that there can be no compariſon between keeping Miſs Watſon and living unmarried, and marrying ſo faſhionable a woman of quality as Lady Mary. However, I muſt own, that theſe concluſions are a little ſophiſtical, for my love leads me like a child, and when I find the way ſhe moves, I hunt for arguments to defend the purſuit. Thus while Lucy was my flame, argument, reflection, reaſon, every thing conſpired to prove that attachment the moſt rational upon earth: But now Lady Mary has almoſt made a conqueſt of this confounded heart of mine, which has ſo little of the man in it, all thoſe fine pleadings have changed ſides.

Do not however imagine that her ladyſhip by the black arch of her expreſſive eye-brow, or thoſe dimples which form the neſts of Cupid himſelf, transformed me at once to her ſlave: no;

no; I was entangled before I knew it, I conſidered her features and was ſmitten piece by piece—but notwithſtanding all this, I cannot root out my Lucy from my boſom. Know, my Frank, that amiable girl is one of the moſt extraordinary in the world—her underſtanding is unbounded, her acuteneſs ſuch as would aſtoniſh you, and withal, has a noble generoſity, a ſuperiority of ſoul which is very rarely met with: I muſt own that in theſe reſpects, her ladyſhip figures but weakly with her. But I am a little inclined to think the ſtrength and brilliancy of her parts have contributed to alienate my affections. One does not naturally wiſh, in an idle hour of diſſipation, for a Sir Iſaac Newton to entertain ourſelves with; but ſome agreeable fellow whoſe ideas do not overtop us. There is no relaxation with your great geniuſes.

Another thing is that degree of attention to one's general reputation which people of large eſtates are neceſſitated to give: It becomes them in forming connections of this kind, to advance themſelves—that is to marry into a family of great diſtinction—of noble blood; and lay by degrees the foundations of thoſe general advances which we ſee ſo often carry men to the height of honours.

However urgent any of theſe motives may be, I cannot yet bring myſelf to part with Lucy:

I love her—notwithſtanding all I have ſaid—if, while ſhe is abſent, ſhe loſes ground in my affection, ſhe is ſure nearly to regain it, when we meet: This wavering ſtate of my affections is a weakneſs I did not think I had been capable of; but it proceeds from this cruel oppoſition of ſentiments which abſolutely racks my breaſt. I had moſt infallibly married Lucy long ago, had I not been afraid of that animated ſpirit which enlivens all her actions; in a wife, I ſhould dread ſuch a mind.

Did I ever tell you of her learning cheſs: She begins to play tolerably: Lady Mary ridicules it and exiſts only with ſpadil: This contraſt weighs greatly with me whenever I am abſent from them, but a ſight of the latter baniſhes ſo juſt a compariſon, and I think no more of cheſs, nor Lucy, nor any thing elſe.

And yet, my dear Frank, (pardon the predilection I have for that glorious effort of the human mind) this noble game is the criterion of every one who plays at it: It is the ſureſt teſt of their abilities; and the moſt unerring proof of what degree of parts they have received from nature. There is no other game, amuſement, or ſcarce an employment, that fathoms the inmoſt ſoul of man more than this of cheſs. I believe, and I ſpeak it without affectation, that I could form no ſlight idea of the character of any perſon without hearing him ſpeak a ſyllable, only

by

by ſtanding over a few of his games of cheſs. You poſſibly will not allow of this; but there moſt undoubtedly is a wonderful ſimilarity between the characteriſtics of my friends who underſtand cheſs, and the ideas I ſhould have formed of them, had I only known their play. I ſhall one day or other explain myſelf further to you on this ſubject, and at the ſame time give you a hint or two of a diſcovery which I think I have made in the original principles of the game. It is that arithmetic and even geometry itſelf may be learned in great perfection merely by ſtudying cheſs: I have no doubt of purſuing this idea until I render it demonſtration itſelf.—Had Lucy taken ſooner to cheſs ſhe had rendered my chains immortal—What a weakneſs is this! but the whole world is governed by prejudice.

The circumſtance which at preſent hurts me moſt is her demanding ſometimes, in a pathetic, and at others in a peremptory manner, my real deſigns. She inſiſts on knowing whether I am connected with any other woman; if I am, ſhe ſays, ſhe is determined never to uſurp another's rights, nor injure any one unknown. Theſe are not only her words, I know they are her ſentiments, and noble ones, it muſt be confeſſed: I never ſee her but theſe are her requeſts, and hitherto I have evaded them, and even denied any connection: But this conduct cannot laſt long: If ſhe gives herſelf any trouble, ſhe may

may eaſily detect me: or an hundred accidents do it without. Thus it is abſolutely neceſſary to explain my deſigns, and yet I know not how it is, but I have not the heart to do it. I ſettled three hundred pounds a year on her for life, for which annuity I ſhould think I might get ſome worthy man of no fortune to marry her; for without fixing her reputably in the world I am determined not to leave her. I wiſh you would think a little of this, and give me your advice; for I want it more than I can expreſs.

LETTER V.

FRANCIS MONSON Eſq. to LADY MARY SION.

YOur ladyſhip's letter a little ſurpriſes me. Can you conceive that your affair with Sir Edward will bear the leaſt trifling? It is abſolutely neceſſary, take my word for it. Therefore let me beg of you not even to think of it as a trifle, but a matter of ſerious importance: I don't mean this as any reproof, but I think you are not eager enough in it. Your Ladyſhip knows my fortune is but ſmall for ſo luxurious an age, and a vacancy in it of four thouſand pounds makes me rather more grave in this affair than I otherwiſe ſhould be; I hint this

this merely that you may always have the ſtrongeſt idea of your affair that is poſſible.

You ſpeak of Sir Edward's miſtreſs in ambiguous terms—but I underſtand you: However, it will not do, a failure in ſuch an attempt would ruin us both, and a failure would be infinitely more probable than ſucceſs. You need not ſuppoſe that I wave it through a want of ſpirit—no; could I but caſt up the two accounts and find the balance on the right ſide, no one could be readier than myſelf to undertake it.

You are diſguſted at Sir Edward's propoſal—ſilly that: What matters it who he keeps after the marriage, or who he introduces to you—ſuch trifles are beneath your notice; agree to any thing, before-hand—get but married, and that quickly, and defy all the reſt.

I have no doubt but I ſhall be able to aſſiſt you greatly; he has an implicit confidence in me; aſks my advice perpetually, and I fear not but I ſhall forward the match. In the mean time give up your quadrille by all means, and apply to nothing but cheſs. You know how ſtrong his foible is that way; the moſt ridiculous fellow that ever diſgraced common ſenſe the moment he touches that ſubject—but ſuch a foible in him might be turned to good profit by you: 'tis the weak part of him, wherein if you attack you will meet with a complete victory. For heavens ſake, Lady Mary, be

adviſed,

adviſed, and conſider the importance of the caſe. Above all things, play at cheſs with him—and never at quadrille in his ſight; I am glad you profited by my inſtructions in quadrille, if you was but to *manage well* and never be *giddy*, it might eaſily be a thouſand a year to you: Theſe main chances your ladyſhip is not attentive enough to.

In Sir Edward's laſt letter to me, he mentions a deſign which gives me pleaſure: It is to marry his miſtreſs, (Miſs Watſon) to ſome perſon whoſe fortune is ſmall, and who will be induced to have her on account of an annuity for her life of three hundred pounds a year, which he has ſettled on her: This plan I will forward as much as poſſible, for if ſhe was once married, the day would be your own.

* * *

Sir Edward has been with me *for advice*. He is come to town from a village in Eſſex, where he has placed his miſtreſs, by her own deſire, not liking to ſtay any longer in London. He conferred with me about marrying her, and ſaid he had thought of Jefferſon. Now Jefferſon is a dependent upon him, an egregious flatterer, thirty-five years of age, a tolerable perſon, an inſinuating addreſs, and he thinks likely to be accepted by Miſs Watſon; he was once an attorney, then in the army, and being broke is at preſent

preſent upon half-pay, which, excepting Sir Edward's favour, is all his fortune. I told him I liked his deſign much, and urged the execution greatly; but he ſeems mightily fearful of her rejecting him, and talks much of her high ſenſe of honour, and her penetration into the characters of mankind: He ſays, he is confident any thing done bluntly will ruin the whole.

As he ſeemed ſtrongly of this opinion, I adviſed him to ſet Jefferſon to work very warily—to ſend him down to the neighbourhood of the village, and direct him to take proper means to become acquainted with her, and then to gain her affections without any appearance of knowing him. He liked this ſcheme, and ſays he will conſider further of it. I do not think he is very ſtrongly enchained by his miſtreſs, for he ſeems to ſpeak of her, after this expedition, with leſs affection than in a letter I had from him not long ſince.

I have much more to ſay to you, but time will not allow: I can only aſſure you how much I am, &c.

F. Monson.

LETTER VI.

Miſs CHARLTON to Miſs WATSON.

REally, my deareſt Lucy, you have been ſo bad a correſpondent lately, that I lay a value on your letters, not only as effuſions of your friendſhip, but as rarities: I beg of you let them no longer have merit on account of their ſcarcity: I prize them too much from other motives to ſuffer this with pleaſure to have any weight. Nor is ſuch a backwardneſs from writing really in character with you; I am much miſtaken or yours muſt be attended with different effects.

Truſt me, my Lucy, your affairs with Sir Edward are in no good way. You aſk what are you to think of his profeſſions?—They are not characteriſtic; compare but the profeſſions and ſentiments of mankind with their *characters*, and nothing is eaſier than to diſtinguiſh diſſimulation from truth. You puſhed him pretty home, and with proper ſpirit: He is a man of ſenſe—of gravity rather than livelineſs—much given to reflection, which is very ſtrongly proved by his paſſion for cheſs: Such being the characteriſtical ſtrokes, was it natural in him to laugh off your queſtions with the eaſy air of a man of the town? No, no, my Lucy, it was all diſſembled; depend upon it he is ſtrongly connected with that lady, notwithſtanding his denials. Let me

beg

beg of you to follow my advice: reflect on his character, and for ever have a compariſon in your mind between his aſſertions and that general and juſt idea of his character which you will infallibly gain: Be attentive to him, and I beg of you inform me of your remarks.

* * *

The difficulty of your ſituation with Sir Edward, is almoſt matched by ſome circumſtances which have happened to me lately: I am many degrees behind you in that manly and noble underſtanding which exalts you above your ſex, which produced that converſation with Sir Edward ſo worthy of yourſelf! ſo characteriſtical! —but, my dear Lucy, I endeavour to make amends for ſo great a deficiency by the juſt attention I give to the characters of thoſe around me: I am far, very far, from having attained a neceſſary penetration in this uſeful walk of human obſervation; but the ſtrong idea I have of its conſequences will render an inferior perfection of capital uſe to me. There is no ſtate or ſituation in life—no repreſentation of mankind—not even a picture of their features, that does not all depend on character. What a ridiculous figure do we make when we act contrary to our characters! What wretched performances are theatrical compoſitions that are not juſtly characteriſtical! What is a picture that does not expreſs the ſoul! or in other words,

words, that does not trace in the features of the mind! In ſhort, my Lucy, this point is of univerſal conſequence, and of uſe to us every day of our lives.

The circumſtance I was going to mention, is what I have hinted once or twice to you; my father, I told you, ſeemed as if he had an inclination that I ſhould liſten to the addreſſes of Mr. Hinchley: he poſſeſſes a large eſtate, my father's only motive, I doubt: But I cannot ſo eaſily give up my own judgment, as his character happens to be ſo little ſuitable to my own: He has really no more idea of any thing characteriſtical in mankind than a puppy dog: all the diſtinctions I ever heard from him never extended further than—"he is a good ſort of "man"—"that's a ſenſible fellow"—t'other's "good natured." But as for the art of *diſtinguiſhing*, you might as well expect it from a poſt. In ſhort, Lucy, I deſpiſe him.

On Thurſday morning at breakfaſt, my father ſaid to me, "Kitty, we ſhall have a good deal of company at dinner to-day, and among the reſt Mr. Hinchley; he has an exceeding good opinion of you: try, my girl, and cultivate it; it will be worth your while." Dear Sir, replied I, I can't ſee why—his opinion is worth nobody's cultivating. My father frowned; my mother cried out: "Aye, Mr. Charlton, you might as well attempt to turn the ſun—I warrant ſhe does not

like his *character*;" with a ſneer.—This want of taſte in examining the characters of people is ſtrong in my mother, but her underſtanding is not equal to my father's, for he, at leaſt does not ridicule the obſervation of characteriſtics.

At dinner we had a large company, among whom Mr. Hinchley made by no means the beſt figure. They gave me a pleaſing opportunity of remarking the conſiſtency of their ſentiments with their character in general as far as I was acquainted with it: There was a Mr. Cary, who came with the Stenhenſons our neighbours, who appeared to be truly characteriſtical, and very ſenſible. He ſat by me, and took an opportunity to make ſome obſervations to me on the characters of the company, with a ſpice of ridicule that was clever: he made a ſtroke or two at Hinchley, who had been talking of horſes and dogs, with ſome politics, and now and then an aukward compliment to me.

Don't you think, Miſs Charlton, that Mr. Hinchley's compliments proceed very unnaturally from him, after ſuch harangues on horſes and hunting? I think it is not in character. Not at all indeed, Sir. But that circumſtance fortunately points out the ridiculouſneſs of his attempt, and ſecures the ſentiments which they always meet with from me: A compliment cannot be ſincere with him; it is all affectation.

Your

Your obſervation, madam, is undoubtedly juſt; and ſhows that you have the art of diſtinguiſhing the reality of character from the appearance; originals ſtrongly marked are eaſy to be diſcerned, but not ſuch as Mr. Hinchley's.

That remark is exceedingly true; but do you think, Sir, that originality of character and originality of ſentiment do not in ſome inſtances vary and confound one in an eſtimate of them?

I ſcarcely know how to decide that queſtion, madam, it is a very important one: I muſt give ſome conſideration to it, and the next time I have the honour of meeting you I will give you my opinion, and at the ſame time put in my pocket a little treatiſe, which is well wrote on originality of character in comedies: I fancy you will like to ſee it.

I thanked him for his intention; and aſſured him I ſhould be very glad of a ſight of it. This man, Lucy, has juſt ideas.

Mr. Hinchley ſtayed longer than the reſt of the company, and took an opportunity of a tête à tête to come to what I may really call a characteriſtical eclairciſſement.

I think, miſs, this view of your papa's garden is very pretty.

Do you?

Yes, miſs, I do. Mayhap you walk in it a good deal.

A good deal.

A walk of a fine evening is mighty agreeable. When I am hunting, I often think how pleaſant ſuch a field and ſuch a one would be for a walk with ſuch an agreeable lady as you, miſs.

That's impoſſible, Sir—When you are hunting you can have no ſuch thoughts. It would not be characteriſtical; you—

Characteriſtical! Miſs? Why, is it not as much ſo to think of you as any thing elſe. I proteſt I had rather think of you than the beſt hound in my pack.

There you are out again: nothing is eaſier than to detect people when they ſpeak ſentiments which are contrary to thoſe peculiar traits of their characters which muſt have a ſtrong influence on all their real opinions: attend to what I ſay, Sir—It will poſſibly ſave you ſome trouble.

Miſs, I'll attend to nothing elſe.

We are all born with ſome diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics which are moulded by education and life into thoſe originalities which really exiſt in every perſon—and to which all their actions, when proceeding from themſelves alone, are perfectly conſiſtent, and their ſentiments the ſame: but when to ſerve particular purpoſes they act or ſpeak contrary to ſuch their natures, it is the buſineſs of people who make it their attention to ſeparate truth from falſhood, to lay open the real character to the light. Rainville, whom I ſuppoſe you have read——

Can't ſay I ever heard of him before——

Explains

Explains this in a very ſenſible manner. Now as I was ſaying,—but you underſtand me——

'Pon my ſoul, miſs, 'tis Greek and Hebrew to me: why I never heard ſuch a harrang—but mayhap you have ſome more to ſay———

But little—fear not—in one word I know your character, I know what muſt be your ſentiments—ſo ſpeak truth to me, and ſay but little.

But little, miſs?

Aye, but little, and let that little be characteriſtical.

Well then, the ſhort and the long of it is this—I——

You what?

Odds bods, I don't know how to ſay it.

What can the man mean?

I could ſpeak before Mr. Pitt on the affairs of the ſtate of the nation better by half.

On what? let me hear what you have to ſay.

Why I——

Proceed.

Odds bods, miſs, I love you.

Oh! you are greatly miſtaken—it is impoſſible. Your character contradicts it.

Character! See there again: Lord, miſs, you confound me with character and riſtics, and the devil knows what. I abſolutely am in love with you—

The characteriſtical diſtinction of——

I long have liked you——

The diſtinctions I ſay of that paſſion—

I have an eſtate——

Are ſo ſtrongly marked——

Of two thouſand pounds a year———

And ſo eſſentially different from———

Well tenanted, in good repair, my manſion—

Your originalities, that I ſay, Sir, you cannot—

Is the beſt houſe in the country——

Poſſeſs a ſpark of that———

Poſſeſs! I tell you, miſs, I poſſeſs every thing to make the married life——

Miſerable——

Happy—I have land, perſonals, caſh, houſes, horſes, dogs, the beſt beagle in Eſſex, I have—

A character!—but ſuch a one, good heavens!

Zounds, miſs, who dares ſay nay to my character? I'd have 'em to know that I am of conſequence in my county, juſtice of the peace, and commiſſioner of the land tax—but what ſignifies ſhilly ſhally. I love you, as the ſaying is, and will make you a good huſband—what can a man ſay more?

Obſerve me, Mr. Hinchley—'tis all falſe from beginning to end: I will demonſtrate to you that every thing you have ſaid is uncharacteriſtical, as clear as an axiom in Euclid.

Lord! Lord! Miſs—the devil take Euclid—I tell you I'll make you a good huſband, what ſignifies all this lingo about characteriſtics?

You think it of no conſequence then?

No more than Bracken's Farriery is to my bay mare's jaundice. You

You know not what originality of character is?

Not I, nor care neither.

But you love me?

Mainly.

And expect to marry me?

Lord, miſs, to be ſure.

Hear me then: thou art a compoſition of ignorance and deceit: thou haſt a deſpicable character with uncharacteriſtical falſities: I deſpiſe your attempts to impoſe upon me. I contemn you, and you may expect as ſoon to reliſh the beauties of originality in Falſtaff, Bayes, Drugger, Lovelace or Emily, as to think I will ever exchange another word with you; ſo, Sir, your ſervant.

Mad as a March hare, by the Lord Harry—but your father ſhall know it.

I left him with haſte, and the next thing I heard was from my father, who was in a paſſion with me for being ſo rude, as he called it, with a gentleman of fortune—Hinchley, I found, had not only complained of my uſage of him, but ſwore I was crazy and fit only for Bedlam. All however is well except the remaining prejudice my father and mother have for him; that continues, and is very diſagreeable to me. I could not help figuring ſtrongly to myſelf, the contraſt between Mr. Cary and this hunting creature: what a characteriſtical difference!

Adieu, my dear. I beg of you be more regular in your correſpondence.

LETTER VII.

Miſs WATSON to Miſs CHARLTON.

Eppingſwell.

BEfore I write a ſyllable of myſelf, give me leave, my dear Kitty, to ſay a word or two about this Mr. Cary you have met with. I know nothing of him; nor recollect ever to have heard his name: but for heaven's ſake be upon your guard, it is ſo very improbable that you ſhould meet with a perſon that *really* chimed in with your own way of thinking ſo readily, that I cannot but have ſuſpicions of him: recollect your fortune; a bait ſufficient to make a million of impoſtors. Do not imagine that I mean to reflect on your original way of thinking, but believe me, Kitty, *it is* original, and therefore the more unlikely to find a ſecond: and let there be ever ſo much merit in it, yet you muſt allow that it may be counterfeited: I only hint a ſuſpicion, which I wiſh you would adopt, and not put too much confidence in your penetration: you ſhould remember it is the characteriſtic of ſome men to be exquiſite at deceit. I forget whether I wrote you of my intention to deſire Sir Edward to procure me a little retreat in ſome village at a diſtance from London: he has hired me a little houſe here, which ſtands pleaſantly:

ly: the noiſe and gaiety of London has long been diſtaſteful to me: a growing melancholy has of late made inroads on my repoſe, until I could bear the town no longer: indeed never wretch was more miſerable than I am: ſo torn between conflicting paſſions.

The matchleſs affection with which I ever loved Sir Edward, I cannot yet baniſh from this miſerable heart; my guilt confounds me on reflection, and I determine to quit him: but then returning ſoftneſs! Oh! Kitty! it again overwhelms and plunges me into freſh guilt, greater than the former, becauſe it follows reflection: would to heaven I knew he was married, that I might leave him at once; which I infallibly ſhould do: and as I cannot have the merit of flying him without, that I might have that to force me.

He does not deſerve the love he meets from me; reaſon, reflection, pride, every thing tells me this: but they tell it me only to increaſe my miſery. I am ſo ſunk by the misfortunes of my folly that I think my faculties are benumbed: I ſee reaſon and virtue clear as the morn; I contemplate their nature, and reſolve to follow them—but do I follow them?—No; I turn my back on every thing my ſoul approves, and ruſh into what it abhors! a miſerable paſſion cauſes this and tears me from myſelf.

I know not one circumſtance of my ſituation that does not give me the moſt poignant ſorrow. For what do I continue to ſacrifice the little remaining peace I can have in this life? for a man that loves me no longer. Fool that I am: I ſee his affection flying far from me, and yet have the weakneſs to——

Oh! Kitty! Kitty!—but I can ſay no more.

* * *

Not having the heart to continue my letter, I threw the paper aſide. To take it up again is but to dip my pencil in the tears of ſorrow, and crayon forth a wretched ſoul.

Sir Edward has juſt left me. My ſuſpicions were not unjuſt: as to affection, he has not now a grain. You ſhall judge of this by the converſation I had with him, which I ſhall minute exactly.

And ſo, my dear Lucy, you really imagine that I have not even any *friendſhip* left for you!

Imagine it, Sir Edward! I muſt be blind indeed if I was not *certain* of it. What is friendſhip if it is not confidence! you treat me with the diſtant coldneſs and diffidence of a ſlight acquaintance. It is what I have not merited from you: how low ſoever I may be fallen with the whole world beſides.

Indeed,

Indeed, Lucy, you wrong me: I have full confidence in *you*; I wiſh you had the ſame in *me*.

Lay open your deſigns ingenuouſly to me: Tell me you no longer love me; tell me you are going to be married to another woman, and I ſhall——

If I was to tell you that, it would be more than I knew myſelf.

Whatever be the cauſe of your late coldneſs then, diſcover it to me: you that boaſt ſo much of the wonderful efficacy of cheſs in improving the heart of man, methinks ſhould let it confer common honour on yourſelf.

That ſneer, madam, on ſo noble a game does not become you: and if you enquire into the motives of my coldneſs, ſeek it in the multitude of your own reproaches.

The deſcent from diſ-ingenuouſneſs to falſhood methinks is very ſpeedy—but I deſpiſe the imputation.

I know how free you are in deſpiſing every thing that concerns me: and I ſhall without doubt follow the example.

And as readily deſpiſe me: that is preciſely what I expect: you are captivated by ſome new face, and then on the mere demand of plain dealing, are galled at your own meanneſs: give occaſion for reproaches from her who being injured preſently grows offenſive.

Theſe airs, madam——

Stop, Sir Edward—give me as much of your hatred as you pleaſe: but do not imagine that I will ſtoop ſo low as to fall into a converſation ſuch as I ſee is coming, that you may take occaſion from it to *diſmiſs me:* I will ſave you that trouble.

Methinks you are——

One requeſt only——

What?

You have a miniature picture of me; that you will doubtleſs return me——

Why ſo?

Becauſe I requeſt it. I have not ſo low an opinion of you as to ſuppoſe you can refuſe it.

Oh! by no means, madam: you ſhall have it now——

Feeling in his pocket for it, he pulled out another, which looking at, he ſeemed much confuſed: fumbled about his pockets again, but to no purpoſe——

Zounds! What the deuce can be come of it! —I—I—had it but yeſterday—this is very ſtrange——

Oh! not at all, Sir!

Confound the picture! It is in my other clothes —Aye—Aye—it muſt be in my other clothes.

In your other clothes!

Oh! madam, you need not be uneaſy, you ſhall have it to-morrow.

Mighty

Mighty well, Sir, it is ſufficient; but pleaſe to ſend it, not bring it—and that to-morrow, for you will not find me here the next day——

From the moment he looked at that other picture he was nothing but confuſion, and took his leave in a very ridiculous manner. The caſe is plain enough, my Kitty, the truth is now clear: that picture was doubtleſs his intended wife, or his preſent miſtreſs, and gives me no ſmall ſatisfaction in diſcovering a truth which he has ſo induſtriouſly concealed. Now I know what meaſures to take: I will quit this houſe, and leave him all I ever received from him: It may be ſome time before I can abſolutely conquer the love I once had, but I ſhall proceed with vigour in the buſineſs, and have not the leaſt doubt of ſucceſs. Was my affection at this moment the moſt ardent that ever warmed a human breaſt, I would root it out, or die in the attempt: guilty as I have been to my own honour and repoſe, I have not ſo forgot my other duties as to ſink any lower. I feel an eaſe at preſent that I have long loſt: the very idea of quitting him for ever gives me pleaſure: The moral rectitude of the human heart will take its natural bent when unclogg'd by ſuch ſtrong paſſions as have hurried me ſo far from myſelf: notwithſtanding all my failings—notwithſtanding my having loſt that for which alone

alone a woman can be eſteemed—yet, thank heaven, I feel within me a riſing emotion—— virtuous I hope, that will aſſuage my grief.

* * *

Wedneſday evening.

I took a walk this afternoon for the ſake of a little freſh air, for the burthen of almoſt perpetual thought both night and day gave me a head-ach which I hoped it would alleviate. I thought a little of that natural livelineſs which renders the country ſo pleaſing, would divert the tendency of my reflections; but I thought in vain: my ideas follow me, and they give riſe to too much thought. The day was moſt pleaſingly fine; the variety of the landſkips which broke upon me from almoſt every point of view, all gilt by the beams of that glorious orb which diffuſes heaven's radiance over all the beauties of nature; which animates the birds to fill the air with the floating melody of their little throats: in ſuch a day as this—in ſuch a ſpot—Oh! Kitty, I firſt met with my ſoul's bane. Eternal conſtancy and love was then vow'd—even in the face of heaven was vow'd! that bright ſun then ſhone the witneſs of the vow, now ſhines upon the ruin'd maid—the ſport of perjury! What was I then! what am I now! Cruel idea! the difference intolerable!

able!—Such were my reflections: I muſt reflect for ever! not a landſkip can I view—nor can I behold the ruſtic moving careleſsly to the labour of the day, but innocence ſtrikes upon my guilty mind, and tells me what I ought to be! The ſun himſelf, blazing in bleſſings to the world, ſhines but to me the witneſs of my woe.

I ſunk upon a bank in tears; almoſt in a trance of the moſt cruel ideas that ever wretchedneſs created; I was for ſome minutes totally unobſerving of any thing around me, but ſuddenly ſtarted at the appearance of an elderly gentleman ſtanding almoſt before me, who by his habit I took for a clergyman.

Either your grief, my good lady, muſt be great—or your appearance very deceiving.

I have no more grief than I have reaſon for—Sir, your ſervant, I did not ſuppoſe I was obſerved.

I was walking off, but he ſtopped me.

Be not ſo quick to leave me, madam: Can a plain well meaning man be of any ſervice to you? I am unhappy to find a fellow creature in ſuch diſtreſs.

I am much obliged to you, Sir, for your good wiſhes and kind offers to me, but believe me I am worthy of neither. I am fit for nothing but entire ſolitude.

I was

I was again leaving the place, but he went on:

Let me perſuade you, madam, to put a little confidence in me. I obſerved you for ſome minutes, and am ſure there muſt be ſomething very particular in your caſe: be it what it may, truſt me, I will be your friend. Are you injured?

Oh! yes, irreparably.

Can I aſſiſt you? by whom?

Myſelf. No aſſiſtance, Sir, can make me forgive myſelf.

Heaven is ever ready to favour thoſe who——

Not thoſe who have not truſted in its goodneſs.

But in future let us hope——depend upon it, madam, the good Deity who preſides over all, ſees and judges of the heart, if you have been guilty——I truſt that you repent—repentance will ever be accepted by—

Oh! Sir, ſpare yourſelf this trouble: your humanity pities me: indeed I am an object of pity: but do not imagine that my reflections are to be lulled aſleep by arguments; my *feelings* will ever be too ſtrong for all the ſophiſtry of reaſoning: if I cannot forgive myſelf, what matters it to me who does?

But, my good lady, the friendly concern of a conſiderate man can be no addition to your grief: ſomething within me pleads powerfully for you: let me beſeech you to truſt me. Where do you live?

On this bank. This is my home. Would to heaven I had never had another!

Your habitation? your houſe? or lodgings?

Thank God, I no longer have any. But lately I was the inhabitant of yonder white houſe you ſee on the hill.

Bleſs me! was you the lady that Sir Edward Manſel brought there not long ſince?

I am ſhe.

Alas! I gueſs your caſe. But admit of comfort.

Admit of it?

You have left that houſe?

I ſhall leave it ſpeedily.

And purpoſe to return no more?

Never, indeed.

To the gentleman I mean.

Return to him!

I ſee, madam, you have juſt ideas, at leaſt at preſent: favour me with your purpoſe, where do you propoſe to fix yourſelf, where live your friends?

Friends! juſt heaven!

Come, lady, weep not ſo much; I live hard by, and you ſhall have an aſylum in my houſe until you find it convenient to remove elſewhere.

Alas! Sir, you know not to whom you make the

the offer: perhaps you may be a married man, and have a family.

I have a wife and one daughter, the latter is now at home, ſhe ſhall receive you.

Thanks for your kindneſs, Sir, but good wiſhes are all I muſt receive from you: humanity prompts you to make an imprudent offer, but gratitude will not ſuffer me to accept it. —Fare you well, Sir.

No, madam: you muſt not leave me ſo: every thing I hear from you tells me that you are different from what appearances ſpeak. My houſe *ſhall* be your reſidence at preſent; accept the offer, and leave a habitation which has given you ſo much uneaſineſs.

Leave it! yes, that moſt undoubtedly. But not to blaſt the reputation of yours—not to kindle up unknown diſturbances——not to——

Say no more, lady—leave that to me: I offer but what's the duty of my ſtation: comply without heſitation with my requeſt.

Aſk it not, Sir: I cannot do it. But if you will recommend me to any cottager in the place that can let me a room to retire to, 'tis all I ask.

Be adviſed, madam: make my houſe your home.

No, Sir, I cannot—you do not conſider the tendency of what you offer. I have a young child too—the proof of my diſhonour.

Let

Let me ſee—why I think I do know of a neighbouring houſe where you may have a lodging.

A retired and cheap one?

Both. When would you move to it?

This moment.

By night it may be ready for you, but the people will not be able to accommodate you before. I will ſpeak with the woman of the houſe for you, and direct her to ſend her ſervant to you when the room is ready.

I thanked the good man with tears in my eyes for his kindneſs, and we parted. I am certain he is a worthy ſoul. He ſeems to be a plain meaning man: of great goodneſs of heart, which is ſtrongly expreſſed in his features, but I am miſtaken if he knows much of the world: his imprudent offer is proof enough of that; which had I accepted, I ſhould have been unkind to him indeed. To ſuffer an unthinking man in the openneſs of his heart to carry a kept miſtreſs home to his wife and daughter—a perſon whoſe character would contaminate even theirs——without knowing who or what they are—perhaps to render them all miſerable by cauſing uneaſineſs among thoſe who poſſibly never knew it before. No; ſuch an action would have been unpardonable.

In the lodging which he will recommend to me, I may be ſequeſtered for a while till I know

know where better to beſtow myſelf. What to do I know not. As to the ſettlement Sir Edward made on me, 'tis the wages of iniquity and I will burn it this moment—the jewels I have received from him I ſhall leave behind me; and keep nothing but clothes enough for bare neceſſity; I am determined never to reproach myſelf more with owning a farthing's value of that price which purchaſed my ſhame——

On ſecond thoughts, which pleaſes me greatly; I have an old gown and ſome other trifles which were *my own:* what a treaſure now! yes, Kitty, I will leave him all—What I have worn and coſt him, that alas! I cannot, and a miſerable thought it is.

I ſhall keep this letter until I am ſettled in my new lodging, and then finiſh it.

* * *

In the evening, as I expected, a maid ſervant came with a lanthorn to light me to my abode, ſaying a lad ſhould come afterwards to bring my trunks, *&c.*—but I told her there was no occaſion for that, as I ſhould move nothing but what I had about me. I took my little Lucy in my arms and followed her; we preſently arrived at her miſtreſs's houſe. She conducted me to a very neat bed-chamber, and left me an hour or thereabouts to myſelf. She then came up with her miſtreſs's compliments and begged the favour

vour of my company at ſupper, but I excuſed myſelf; the meſſage was repeated however warmly, and as I did not care the people ſhould think me ſtiff, and thought it might diſſipate a few of my melancholy reflections, I went down; nobody was in the room; but in a few minutes who ſhould enter—but my friend the clergyman. It ſtruck me immediately that I was in his houſe: but I did not care to be the firſt to ſuppoſe it. I have taken the liberty, madam, to come and aſk you how you like your lodging: I wiſh it may meet with your approbation. And I have brought my daughter to introduce her.

She entered the room as he ſpoke.

Betſy, my dear, added he, this is the Lady I mentioned to you; you will find her an agreeable neighbour, I can tell you.

The young creature embraced me in an affectionate manner. What anſwer could I make? none: I burſt into tears. My eyes were never watry ones, but this was a ſlight touch which ſtruck me with my condition: which brought all myſelf riſing to the idea, that choak'd my utterance.

I dried my tears. Supper came in—the deceit was carried on thinly—the miſtreſs of the houſe *could not come*, and other circumſtances convinced

convinced me I was my friend's gueſt. I hinted it to him, but he waved it in an aukward, though a very friendly manner. His daughter exerted herſelf with the appearance of infinite good nature to entertain me; and in a manner which diſplayed no deficiency of underſtanding.

I was very backward in converſing, for my head was too much crouded with ideas for the utterance of many words.

The young lady took her leave of me preſently after ſupper; and then the father addreſſed me in a hearty friendlineſs of *manner* which made full amends for a certain aukwardneſs which I thought even added to that native worthineſs which was ſo apparent in him.

Come, my good lady, be not ſo melancholy: depend upon me; believe me, you are ſecure of my beſt aſſiſtance.

Humane and friendly as this conduct is, Sir, it gives me great pain. I would not ſtay in your houſe on any account whatever. The more you preſs me to it—the more kind and obliging you are; the ſtronger are my reaſons againſt it. I feel with increaſing ſtrength the gratitude which neceſſitates me to leave you. Indeed, Sir, in this affair you ſeem not to know the world—think of——

In this or any ſuch caſe, I think not of the world: I *will* do what I think is my duty: give me

me not merit in it—there is none: was I to feel myſelf ſo loſt to chriſtian charity as to ſuffer you to leave my houſe, I ſhould be unhappy indeed. My age and character ſecure me from all aſperſions that this affair can throw on me, my wife is a worthy woman, and I am certain will ſee the *neceſſity* of the ſtep I take, as well as myſelf: my daughter is a good girl, and knows how to diſtinguiſh between the appearance and reality of guilt.

Then ſhe will have the ſenſe to give me my due: and ſhun my company. Your daughter's being in a houſe with me is the great objection, Sir: It is what I would not ſuffer for the world: Innocence is not ſufficient for a woman—ſhe is nothing without an unſullied reputation.

Well, madam, if my reaſons cannot convince you, I muſt uſe a little reſtraint: I know too well the horror of abandoning a young woman of your figure to wild chance, to ſuffer it—I will not be guilty of ſuch a crime.

If you inſiſt then, Sir, on my remaining a ſingle day in your houſe, I can only do it on condition that you immediately ſend your daughter from it, on a viſit to ſome relation or friend at a diſtance, during my ſtay with you: If you will not agree to this, I am poſitively determined to be gone this moment.

This very requeſt of yours convinces me how little neceſſity there is for parting you: But I will do it. She ſhall go to her uncle's in London.

To-morrow morning.

Nay; why in ſuch a hurry?

I cannot think of ſtaying one moment with her. When does your Lady return?

Well it ſhall be ſo. My wife I expected to-night—but ſhe will come to-morrow.

The good natured girl, I found, was much diſpleaſed with this determination: ſhe came to me this morning before ſhe went, and reproached me with great kindneſs for my deſiring it, and ſaid ſhe ſhould be very unhappy if ſhe ſhould not ſee me again ſoon. I take the opportunity of ſending this by her. Adieu, my Kitty, I ſhall expect a little hiſtory from you next.

L. WATSON.

LETTER VIII.

Sir EDWARD MANSEL to F. MONSON, Eſq.

ZOunds and death! Frank, what a blundering blockhead am I! Here I have been with her ladyſhip; and meaning to preſent her with my picture ſet with diamonds, put into her hands one of Lucy Watſon. We began an ambiguous converſation on ſeeing it, which I, not knowing my miſtake, thought wonderful ſtrange; I expreſſed ſome wiſhes of living with her conſtantly and ſo forth, under the title of the original of the picture. I know not how, but I recollect it muſt all appear to her as a propoſal for Lucy and ſhe to be mighty good friends and live together: a confounded jumble! and I know not what to make of it now: I am abſolutely ſhy of going to her.

I ſhould not have found out my miſtake, but yeſterday at Eppingſwell, I had a violent quarrel with Lucy; which at laſt came to her demanding back her picture; and feeling in my pocket for it, found only my own: I was not a little confuſed, ſhe reproached me with ſneers of jealouſy, and I, ſtruck with the miſtake I had made, quitted her with no ſmall pleaſure.

This quarrel, Frank, eaſed me of no inconſiderable burthen: I wanted to get rid of her, but had

no reſolution to leave her—returning fits of paſſion unmanned my reſolution, and made me at times extremely uneaſy. But this quarrel ſhe fell into inſolently enough, and even ridiculed the noble game which ſhe knows I think the utmoſt effort of human genius; in ſo much that I loſt my patience at once, and care not whether I ever ſee her again, were ſhe but ſettled advantageouſly in the world: and this ſolicitude proceeds not from love but honour. She is a woman of birth, ſenſe and ſpirit; and the leaſt I can do is to leave her advantageouſly fixed. Had ſhe not taken it into her head to reproach me with cheſs, I might have had more trouble in breaking her chain: it is almoſt incredible to me that a woman of ſo quick a comprehenſion to whom I have explained ſome of the principles of that game, and ſhowed their vaſt and extenſive properties, and how infinitely even common ſenſe and morals are to be deduced from the fundamentals of it, ſhould be ſo blind as to forget ſuch genuine excellency, and give up the plaineſt of her ideas for the ſake of a little reproach.

I have thought much of my ſcheme of marrying her to Jefferſon, if it could be brought about: but I queſtion it very much; however I cannot recollect any perſon ſo likely to ſucceed with her: and I think he would not ſcruple to

to take the charge of her little daughter by adopting it—I ſhall ſound him upon it ſoon.

* * *

Jefferſon has been with me; after a game or two at cheſs, (I beat him five; he is a good player, but is not perfect in Cunningham's gambit yet) I ſpoke to him of my deſign——

Mr. Jefferſon, pray have you any thoughts of marrying?

None, Sir Edward.

But I ſuppoſe if a tolerable match offered, you would not have many ſtrong objections.

To better that fortune, Sir Edward, which your bounty has deigned to beſtow on me, (*'tis a flattering dog, but I give you his words exactly*) I certainly ſhould have no objection.

I have now and then thought a little about advancing you in the world——

Your goodneſs is infinite, Sir Edward—

And I think I could recommend——

Any thing that Sir Edward Manſel could recommend, I ſhould moſt undoubtedly conſider as my greateſt good.

I have a match for you in my eye, which, if the lady could be brought to conſent, would be advantageous.

You are infinitely obliging, Sir.

Did you ever ſee one Miſs Watſon, a lady I had lately a connection with?

Never, Sir Edward: but have heard you mention her.

What ſay you to marrying her?

If it is your pleaſure, Sir Edward, I am all ſubmiſſion.

Aye, Mr. Jefferſon, but I have a great regard for her, and ſhall not marry her unleſs I am certain her huſband will uſe her extremely well.

I ſhould never think of uſing any one otherwiſe that you recommended, Sir.

She has a young daughter; that would be no objection, I ſuppoſe?

None in the leaſt, if it is Sir Edward's pleaſure.

I ſhould not let either be a burthen upon you.

Your generoſity, Sir, I have long experienced.

Miſs Watſon has a ſettlement for life of three hundred pounds a year; which will be no bad fortune for you.

An exceeding good one, Sir Edward. I am all ſubmiſſion.

But you muſt adopt the daughter, by giving a bond to the mother, for her uſe, and then her child's, before your marriage, of a certain ſum.

Whatever you dictate, Sir Edward, is with me a law.

Well, Sir: Miſs Watſon is now at Eppingſwell, a village in Eſſex. I would have you take the proper meaſures to become acquainted with her

her—gain her good opinion, and get her conſent as ſoon as poſſible.

I will immediately execute your orders, Sir.

Be attentive to your ſucceſs. Do not let her diſcover you know any thing of me: and manage ſo as to command ſucceſs, if you expect my approbation.

You may depend, Sir Edward, upon my utmoſt endeavour.

You ſee, my friend, this fellow is juſt the thing; he has no qualms of pride or honour, but to buſineſs only on the word. Such people are uſeful: indeed he has his merit: the dog now and then hits off a good ſtroke at cheſs. He plays his king's biſhop well.——I gave him ſome particular inſtructions, with a bill of a hundred pounds for the expences of the ſcheme, and directed him to be quick in preparing for it.

Farewel: I ſhall expect to ſee you ſoon.

E. MANSEL.

LETTER IX.

Lady MARY SION to F. MONSON, Eſq.

HAſten to me, my friend, I have buſineſs of conſequence to impart. This Sir Edward of yours has no ſoul—He is a very wretch—Was I to marry him, I ſhould in ſix weeks ſee a cheſs pawn preferred to me: he wants to mix his plebeian blood with that noble ſtream which flows in my veins—think of his inſolent propoſal to me, to be the mere cover to his amours—to keep his drabs under my very noſe! think of all this, think of ſuch mortification to a woman of my ſpirit; and then think of my kind ſtars throwing the Count de la Monière in my way! Smitten at once: and now my ſlave! Handſome, amorous, rich, young, polite, gay, eaſy; in ſhort, the man of faſhion!

Ugh! that dirty cheſs-mate fellow! what a contraſt!

Know, however, that I have made a conqueſt of this nobleman: whoſe birth and merit are equal to any thing fortune can ſend him.

Never did you behold a man who loſt his money with a better grace: as I won it, his ill luck ſeemed to give him pleaſure.

His

His converſation is gallantry, and agreeableneſs itſelf. Far different from that muſty fellow Sir Edward.

Do not, with any of your hums and haws, and ſaws, and wiſe ſpeeches, tell me to be prudent and careful and ſuſpicious; I have been all theſe: I have put the Count to the teſt of all, and I find his deſigns moſt truly honourable.

You muſt know, my friend, that people of my rank in life—but more particularly of that faſhionable ſpirit of the times—that gaiety and eaſy turn which is almoſt innate in quality, muſt expect to match themſelves to thoſe of equal ideas, and ought to deſpiſe all beneath them. Never was this difference more ſtriking than in the contraſt between the Count and Sir Edward: the latter is rich and dreſſes, and does not want ſenſe; but where's the polite liberal generoſity, the perfect negligence of money, where's the taſte and elegance of dreſs; where the art of diſplaying a fine underſtanding in the very manner of ſpeaking even half a ſyllable!—No; theſe muſt not be looked for in Sir Edward.

In ſhort, Mr. Monſon, I deteſt him. I would match myſelf to a bag of cheſs men as ſoon—*provided*, however, I could get ſuch a gallant nobleman as the Count in his place—*if not*, why then indeed, I ſhould be forced to take up with t'other.

Now, I prithee, none of your advice—I know your ſentiments before I hear them—and ſo keep 'em to yourſelf. I ſhall remember your main chance, which you preach ſo much about—and not affront Sir Edward, but keep him hanging in uncertainty, until I have the Count poſitively ſure, then the devil may take him for me—but if, contrary to all expectation, I ſhould be miſtaken in the Count, the caſe will then be different.

None of your contradictions, I will not hear them. Monſon! thou art almoſt as great a wretch as Sir Edward—I declare if you do not change yourſelf into a different animal, I ſhall hate you—and the idol of your ſoul, your caſh—but I will not rally you—you have no feeling for it. Adieu.

M. Sion.

LETTER X.

Captain Jefferson to Mr. Cary.

BY all the gods, if I could tear heart, brains, and liver from the curs'd carcaſs of this damn'd villain—this Sir Edward, I'd haſh, ſtew, pound 'em into mummy, and devour the diſh with more goût than ever Cannibal feaſted on

on the fleſh of Indian. Hell and deſtruction ſeize his cold haughtineſs of inſolent pride, that with the eaſy indifference of the moſt ſovereign ſuperiority, could propoſe to marry me to his caſt-off ſtrumpet! Hear me, Cary! read that again—aye to his ſtrumpet: think of my blood, think of your friend's ſoul, could it brook this? no: by the gods, his milky blood ſhall lay the duſt beneath my feet, before ſuch mockery of inſolence ſhall take effect. May infernal ſpirits of the black regions of the damned fly with me ſwift to their curs'd caves, if I have not my revenge? Satan ſeize this helliſh world, in which a man may act the gallant ſoldier, and reap laurels in regions known but by name, to theſe milk-ſop baronets—theſe upſtart titled puppies, and yet ſtarve with honour, and become dependent on ſuch deſpicable riff raff. Zounds! if it was my fate to flatter a king—to bow the knee to the firſt miniſter of ſtate, in company with my ſuperiors, 'twould not gall me, but to this meer ſhadow of importance, this reflection of a phantom's image! 'tis too much: I ſhould not be able to ſupport it, but for the idea of my revenge! Revenge! be mine: Yes; I will glut thee 'till my mind, big with ſatiety of joy, gives over her purſuit. Could I but ſee friend, father, brother, wife, child, and every connection that ever warmed his curſed breaſt,

falling in bloody ruin round me—'twould be ſome.hing—'twould be a feaſt indeed!

Be attentive to his ſcurvy ſcheme. It was to marry me to his caſt-off trull; to tye me down by bonds to her child—to adopt it to make an admirable father to it—and a ſpecial good huſband to madam. Think of this! think of this to one of my kidney! whoſe ideas, whoſe rights are ſo ſuperior to my fortune! I acquieſced at once—flattered the fool into a belief that I was all ſubmiſſion: this was neceſſary: I will ſtick at nothing that in the round of chance may bring me an opportunity to ſnatch my juſt revenge. He expreſſes great regard for her——Regard! yes, yes: doubtleſs his regard would fix a pair of horns on my ſcull! hang him for a fool, to think me ſuch a one!—and all this for an annuity for her life of three hundred pounds a year.

He gave me a bill for an hundred pounds for the expences of the affair: this money I will apply if poſſible to his confuſion; if I can, to his deſtruction: but it will be neceſſary to become acquainted with Miſs Minx, however, to get a perfect knowledge of the whole affair, and diſcover where I can beſt plant my batteries. He has certainly left this miſtreſs (Watſon is her name) for ſome other: I muſt find her out, and if I can but diſcover his weak parts, I ſhall then

then be able to probe all his wounds with the unrelenting hand of vengeance itſelf.

I am exceſſively ſorry to find you are ſo unhappy: we both of us have been imprudent in money matters, but I have had no ſuch fortune to ſpend as you have. Your contempt of œconomy has degenerated abſolutely into extravagant folly, for I can give your projects no other name, ſince heaven knows whether you may not thereby become as dependent as myſelf. Your determination to gain another fortune, is ſenſible and worthy a man of ſpirit—but depend upon me, Cary, you will never do it by marriage. That of all other means, is the moſt difficult in your ſituation, that is in poverty; but none more eaſy to a man that has ſomething. It requires one fortune to be able to get another by marriage.

Your ſcheme on Miſs Characteriſtic is not bad, but it will never do, it will turn out a mere project. She is too important for her parents to let her fall into your arms, elſe her own folly would be moſt admirable ſtuff for you to work upon. However, try your luck; as long as it is not an expenſive buſineſs, proſecute it. If I can be of any ſervice to you, write me immediately—you may command me. Farewel.

LETTER XI.

Mr. CARY to Captain JEFFERSON.

THE friendſhip I have for you will not ſuffer me to be ſo indifferent to your welfare as to keep from you a plan which I lately formed; and which I am very certain muſt place you in total independence, and give you conſiderable wealth. Give up thoſe ſtrong ideas of revenge, which are ſpirited, I own, but which cannot be executed without as total ruin to yourſelf as your enemy: leave theſe affairs, I ſay, and think rather of bettering yourſelf than of ruining others in ſport. He deſerves all, I own; but be adviſed, and execute this plan which will be a mine of wealth to you. But to explain, and that methodically.

You muſt know, 1ſt, That exceedingly fertile land is to be purchaſed at a very low rate in the iſland of Tobago in the Weſt Indies: *Secondly*, That iſland naturally produces all the oriental ſpices which the Dutch Eaſt India company make ſo profitable a monopoly of, as to ſell them from eight to nine and ten ſhillings a pound, thoſe which coſt them no more than two p nce.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Tobago ſpices would, by culture, become of equal, and ſome of them ſuperior in value to the oriental.

Fourthly, A knowledge of the method of cultivating them might be gained with the greateſt eaſe in ſome of the Molucca iſlands; nay one or two of the natives might be bribed for a ſmall ſum of money to ſettle in Tobago.

Fifthly, The products of the propoſed plantation or *park* would yield a vaſt profit. viz. A clove tree, for inſtance, will yield one year with another, five pound of cloves, which, at eight ſhillings a pound, is two pounds a tree, and a ſlave may with eaſe cultivate an hundred trees, beſides maintaining himſelf: in other words, two hundred pounds profit for each ſlave. Let us ſuppoſe forty of them, the coſt of which would at thirty pounds each, be twelve hundred pounds; and their annual profit eight thouſand pounds: the number might then yearly be encreaſed until twenty or thirty thouſand pounds a year would be gained—in ſhort, an immenſe fortune ſpeedily made.

Sixthly, The preſent planters in Tobago are all in the old hum-drum walk, they raiſe nothing but ſugar: they go on in the old road, ſo you would have no competitors.

Seventhly, You might eaſily manage the expence, as follows. Slaves, twelve hundred pounds.

Expences

Expences of a voyage to the Eaſt Indies and bribing ſome of the Moluccayans, ſuppoſe four hundred. And ſundries, four more. Thus, two thouſand pounds would lay the foundation of the greateſt fortune in Europe. This ſum is at your command. You may, in one word, marry Miſs Watſon and ſell her life in the annuity; it would raiſe conſiderably more.

See, my friend, the extent of the plan; I will readily undertake the voyage to the Moluccas for you: and you may depend on all poſſible attention in me to your intereſts. By all means lay aſide the prejudices of the common herd of mankind, and ſee ſuch a ſtriking truth in its real light. Conſider it well, and let me have your ſentiments. If you come into the ſcheme, I will at once give up Miſs Character.

It is aſtoniſhing to me, that in this enlightened age, while the ideas of mankind are ſo prodigiouſly enlarged, and while ſuch conſuming luxury ruins ſuch multitudes, and impoveriſhes all, that there is no more ſpirit of adventure among people who almoſt ſtarve at home. In the laſt age, while the ſpirit of diſcovering new countries was ſo prevalent, and the improvement of them ſo ardently purſued, men of ſmall fortunes embarked in ſuch deſigns, and many of them enriched themſelves prodigiouſly: but now, all kinds of evils are ſubmitted to at home rather than

than quit a native country, in which they cannot live without ruin. The priſons of England are full of people who might this day have been in affluence had they poſſeſſed the ſpirit of Elizabeth's reign.

Let us view but the circle of our acquaintance, and ſee how many there are who poſſeſs fortunes that would be ſufficient to make very noble diſcoveries, and lay the foundation for vaſt wealth, but who ſcarcely exiſt at home on them.

That prodigious expance of ocean, the vaſt South Sea, abounds with immenſe treaſures in an infinite number of iſlands which have been juſt mentioned by navigators in the old tract: but more to the ſouth lies that fifth part of the world, of which, to the eternal diſhonour of theſe ages, is yet unknown further than here and there a point of coaſt. I have preſented ſeveral plans for expeditions to form ſettlements on it to the miniſtry, and ſeveral of the richeſt of the nobility, but there is no *ſoul* among them: I was always treated as a viſionary: I did not, however, forget that the great Columbus met firſt with the ſame fate. I demonſtrated to a noble duke that for half the yearly expence of the footmen which paraded before his chair, I would undertake to ſettle an iſland for him in the South Sea, (and of which, he owned, he could get a grant) that beſides ſilver, produced

nutmegs

nutmegs and cloves, with all the other richeſt commodities of the richeſt climates. What name ſhall I give to a refuſal with contempt! But I will not treſpaſs on your patience: I have little doubt but my plan will meet with a different reception from you. Conſider it well, and do not throw away ſo precious an opportunity.

Yours,

F. CARY.

LETTER XII.

Miſs WATSON to Miſs CHARLTON.

HEaven in the kindeſt hour certainly ſent Mr. Thomas, (that is my benefactor's name) to be my guardian angel. He is the moſt worthy honeſt creature I ever met with, not of ſtrong parts, and with no brilliancy of underſtanding; but the very want of theſe actually renders the man the more engagingly agreeable. His ideas are very plain, but they have all the harmony which reſults from the cleareſt conſcience: in a word, he is the very picture of humanity.

I told you in my laſt that Mr. Thomas expected his wife home the day his daughter went to London. She accordingly came: I did not

ſee her until tea; her huſband I ſuppoſe had explained the reaſons of my being there: for ſhe did not ſeem ſurpriſed at ſeeing me, but I thought ſhe looked very coldly upon me; however, leſs than that I could not expect, but ſhe was civil. The next day Mr. Thomas took an opportunity of ſpeaking to me concerning Sir Edward.

Surely, madam, that gentleman muſt have very little thought, to attempt the ſeduction of a young lady from her father's houſe, and then abandon her, deſtitute to the world!

I have reaſon enough, Sir, to think meanly of him; but nevertheleſs, I muſt do him the juſtice to exculpate him there: he gave me a ſettlement for life of three hundred pounds a year.

I am glad to hear that: it ſhows at leaſt that he was not totally ungenerous: and that income will be ſome comfort, for the loſs of a better I ſuppoſe from your parents.

Oh! Mr. Thomas, ſuch deſigns were very far from my thoughts; I left him his ſettlement —never will I depend on the wages of my iniquity for any thing whatever.

That ſentiment does you honour indeed, madam; I beg your pardon for the ſuppoſition: I honour your ſpirit. The acceptance of the annuity would have diſgraced you. Do not, however, be uneaſy for the want of it; you ſhall reſide with us as long as ever my houſe is agree-

able

able to you: and I will in the mean time do my endeavour to reconcile you to your father.

That endeavour, Sir, will be vain, it is impoſſible: neither do I think that providence will ſo much abandon any of its creatures as to ſuffer one to be in real want that has induſtry enough to attempt her maintenance.

My dear lady, of what uſe would induſtry be to you? The notion has great merit, but ſuch a thing would be impracticable.

You are miſtaken, Sir; I have no doubt but I could maintain myſelf in a decent competency, in many little trades which depend on women's work.

I beg of you, Miſs Watſon, do not form any ſuch ſuppoſitions that are ſo unkind to me: do you think I am devoid of all humanity? you need not be uneaſy about your future deſtiny, in reſpect to a decent competency: I will either reconcile you to your parents, or ſupply, as well as I am able, their place.

Such goodneſs, Sir, deſerves the moſt grateful expreſſions—but I ſhould ill requite your generoſity to think of becoming ſuch a burthen to you. No, Sir: it is impoſſible.

Well, madam, we will talk no longer of it; but you muſt allow me to point out the immenſe difficulties, and even dangers of a young woman's depending, in the world, on herſelf alone:

alone: not to remark to you the impoſſibility of your maintaining yourſelf, I might ſpeak only of the innumerable inſults the ſituation is open to, which would admit, in a thouſand circumſtances, of no redreſs. No, Miſs Watſon, this muſt not be the reward of thoſe valuable ſentiments which your misfortunes have given birth to in your mind. You know not the difficulty of maintaining yourſelf and a child.—But be ſo good as to give me a relation of your adventures, for ſuch, I ſuppoſe, they may be called: and let me know a little concerning your family, that I may be able to judge in what manner I had beſt apply to them.

My hiſtory, Sir, is comprized in a very few words: I will give it you with great ſincerity; and lay open the ſources of my preſent miſery with the utmoſt confidence in your humanity.

My father is a gentleman of a very large eſtate in Nottinghamſhire. I was the firſt fruit of his marriage with a neighbouring nobleman's daughter, and as they had for a few years no other child but myſelf, I was of courſe their darling; indeed they humoured me in ſo uncommon a manner that they ſeemed to have no other pleaſure than gratifying all the moſt whimſical deſires that entered my imagination. My very look was made a law to a numerous

numerous family, at an age when I ought to hav
been regarded as a mere child: unfortunately thi
perpetual ſcene of fond indulgence, laſted afte
I had attained the power of obſervation, and wa
able to form compariſons between good an
evil. My brother then came into that world
which I thought was made alone for me—m
miſtake however was ſoon corrected: from tha
moment I ſaw myſelf ſenſibly neglected by thoſ
parents whoſe late tenderneſs was ſo exceſſive
This contraſt cut me to the heart, I bemoaned
in ſilence—I was even outwardly reproachful in
an infantine manner: I could not bear ſuch a
cruel change. But this new conduct of mine
ſet my father and mother completely againſt me;
they ſeemed to have loſt all affection for me;
after having been indulged in the moſt unbound-
ed manner before all companies, I was almoſt
totally confined to the nurſery: I was thrown
aſide like an old faſhioned play-thing, and no
longer met with a ſingle mark of fondneſs from
parents who before had exiſted only in my
ſmiles. The very ſervants were ſuffered to in-
ſult me.

Such was the bitter life I led until I was at
an age to be ſent to a boarding-ſchool, when
I was packed off, not for the ſake of giving me
an accompliſhed education, but to get rid of my
company, which I am well perſuaded was al-
moſt

moſt odious to them: a ſtrange turn of their minds, which I know not how to account for otherwiſe than by attributing it to a conſciouſneſs of acting wrong towards me, and it is certainly common to diſlike the ſight of thoſe we injure.

At ſixteen I left the ſchool to return to my father's houſe, and was received in a manner that cut me to the very ſoul. From that time I ſaw clearly that I was doomed to a life of miſery: and regretted nothing ſo much as being obliged to live with my parents—the company, of all others, that was neceſſarily the moſt irkſome to me: and of courſe, I took as little of it as was poſſible: I ſpent my time in rambling about the park, in reading, and whatever little diſſipation I could command, to prevent me from reflecting on my wretchedneſs. This behaviour was remarked by my father and mother—they ſaw clearly enough that I was very far from having that happy mixture of duty and affection for them which they thought they ſaw in my brother, and conſequently that which was really the *effect* of their unkindneſs, became then the freſh *cauſe*.

When the winter arrived, and they were near transferring their reſidence to London, I was ſilly enough to expreſs ſome ſatisfaction at the thought of ſpending my time there; the expectation of a little amuſement induced me

to

to do this: my wiſhes were carried to my mother by the ſervants, and ſhe determined from that moment to leave me in the country. My father readily came into the ſcheme, and I was left meerly becauſe going would have given me pleaſure. As to the dangerous impropriety of leaving a girl alone in the country, it did not enter their heads, becauſe they cared not what became of me. I call it *alone*, for notwithſtanding the governeſs was left with me, they ought to have known, her preſence would be as nobody's to me.

This woman was neither good nor bad; but ſhe knew too well my parents careleſſneſs of me to think of ſupplying its place through friendſhip; ſhe was attentive to her own purſuits and left me to mine. They conſiſted in nothing but walking and books: and theſe, innocent as they were, introduced me to my ruin: for in one of my rambles I accidentally met with Sir Edward Manſel: he knew me—knew the treatment I met with at home, and with the moſt ardent politeneſs, cultivated an acquaintance with me from that day. He ſupplied me with books, took occaſion to fall often in my way, gained admittance, I know not how, in the houſe to viſit me: took every means to gain my affections, which he ſucceeded too eaſily in, and in fine accompliſhed my ruin, amidſt a profuſion of vow

vows and oaths to marry me. On my remonſtrating the neceſſity of that meaſure, he took me from my father's houſe, and carried me down into Cornwall, where he hired a houſe, and in which he lived for ſome time. He afterwards moved to London, and ſince that time I have never ſeen the face of either of my parents; I have led a life of inſupportable miſery, and regretted, in the anguiſh of my ſoul, the day I left my father's houſe. Indifferently as I was there treated, it was a paradiſe to the ſcenes I have met with ſince. Conſcious innocence is a ſupport under every misfortune: but conſcious guilt is cruelly the reverſe. This, Sir, is my ſhort tale: all the enjoyment of life is fled, and the only wiſh of my ſoul is to fix my dear little infant (dear ſhe is to me, though the living witneſs of my infamy) in the ſecure protection of ſome worthy perſon, and then, the ſooner I leave a world ſo wretched to me, the happier I ſhall think myſelf.

Madam, replied Mr. Thomas, your ſtory is an affecting one, but be comforted, I might almoſt ſay you have not even been to blame: God has forgiven you beyond a doubt: you have repented your fault ſincerely; and believe me, I condemn your cruel parents infinitely more than you: it is to them you may attribute your ruin, it was almoſt the unavoidable conſequence of their

their infamous treatment of you. But I think it is impoſſible they ſhould be ſo devoid of pity and ſo hardned in their neglect of you, as not to liſten to the cogent reaſons I can offer for their receiving you even with tenderneſs.

Believe me, I know them better. I have no dependence there, or any where elſe—'tis myſelf——a———

Your dependance ſhall be on me—talk not of any one elſe. I will be a father to you, lady, and protect you from future inſults, in caſe your natural one forgets himſelf ſo much. But I am determined to apply immediately to him.

Your kindneſs is very great, Sir; but as to the idea of living with you—of adding to a valuable virtuous family, a woman deſtitute of character, and a fatherleſs infant, I muſt plainly declare, Sir, it is what I neither can nor will do: your humanity knows no bounds; poor as I am, my return can be nothing but gratitude: and I will not be ſo ungrateful as to act in utter defiance of it. You ſay you will be kind enough to apply for me to my father; it will be in vain—but however the trial can do no harm: if he continues inexorable, then I muſt conſider of ſome plan of life whereby to earn a decent maintenance.

Of that we will talk hereafter, but in the mean time, madam, I will pay a viſit to your father.

This

This worthy man goes the firſt opportunity, my dear Kitty: I will write you the reſult of his application: pray heaven it may be proſperous. Adieu.

L. WATSON.

LETTER XIII.

Miſs CHARLTON to Miſs WATSON.

NOthing upon earth, my dear Lucy, can give me greater pleaſure than hearing you are accidentally fallen into ſuch worthy and valuable hands as Mr. Thomas: you are happy in that reſpect; which is no more than a mere reward of your merit, for greater I never met with: I cannot diſcover one ſingle ſtroke in you uncharacteriſtical—you are conſtantly original in every thing.

By being original, I do not mean that you are a very ſcarce out of the way character—an idea commonly connected with that term, but I think unjuſtly; for the plaineſt qualities of the mind and thoſe which are the oftener met with, may in a million of various modifications form true originality: it is not only Falſtaff, Bayes, Drugger, Jago, Zanga, *&c. &c.* that are originals; Ranger, Felix, Lovemore, and

many others which are met with every day in common life are equally ſo.

Depend upon it, my dear Lucy, that we ſeldom act wrong when we keep perfectly in character—it is by deviating from ourſelves, that we come to deviate from what is right.

Before I forget it, let me preſume to adviſe you who are ſo much more capable to adviſe me—or rather let me call it only reminding you, that you cannot act more prudently than in accepting Mr. Thomas's invitation. Do not be in a hurry to leave him; he is a valuable man, and without recurring to convenience alone, he is really worth ſtudying; you will find his character not only good, but truly original. Take not this as advice; there is nothing I deſpiſe more: your people who are great takers of advice have no characters at all, but depend on others for what every one ſhould have within herſelf.

I mentioned Mr. Cary in my laſt. The meeting him, which I then deſcribed to you, was productive of a viſit from him, when he brought me the eſſay on originality of character: it by no means pleaſed me; I expreſſed my ſentiments to him on a paſſage or two he read to me: he agreed entirely with me; and ſpoke on other parts of it very ſenſibly.

He aſked me concerning Mr. Hinchley.

Report

Report ſays, your father, madam, has ſome deſign of marrying you to him.

Name him not, Sir, he is a moſt odious fellow.

Why truly, Miſs Charlton, I think he is every way unworthy of you. He does not abound with thoſe characteriſtical touches which mark the man, and throw off opportunities for all to judge of him. One cannot even call him truly a fox hunter. It would hurt me infinitely to ſee you plagued with ſuch a man.

My father is prejudiced in his favour on account of his large eſtate: but he is too good a parent to think of forcing my inclinations.

Doubtleſs, madam; but it is a pity he has not thoſe juſt ideas of character which render his daughter ſo ſuperior to her ſex.

No complimenting, Mr. Cary: if my ideas are juſt, the merit is none of my own. My father laid, by a good education, the foundation of all my acquiſitions. But I muſt own his notions of character are not altogether complete.

Would to heaven mine were!

Yours! Sir.

Yes, mine, madam: if I had but a quarter of your penetration in that reſpect, I ſhould be the happieſt man in England.

I thought, Sir, you had attended particularly to the ſtudy of mankind.

I have, Miſs Charlton, and I thought I had made a great proficiency in diſcerning the cha-

racteriſtics of them: but every converſation I have with you, convinces me, by your vaſt ſuperiority, how inferior I am.

Oh! Mr Cary, don't let flattery be your characteriſtic.

No, by heaven: I know it not: to flatter would not in me be the leaſt characteriſtic: but, Miſs Charlton——

What?

Could I but think you——

(Looking earneſtly at me.

Dear Sir, I do not underſtand you.

May I hope? *(Taking my hand gently.*

Hope what?

Moſt amiable woman! *(preſſing my hand with his lips, and dropping on one knee.)*

Mr. Cary! what means this? let me go.

No, valuable woman, you muſt not refuſe one only requeſt——

Requeſt!

Say you will make me happy in granting it.

Prithee, Sir, have done.

Then you will not? cruel woman, you are proud of your underſtanding, and will let no one attempt to equal you.

I know not what you mean.

For heaven's ſake then *(kiſſing my hand again)* favour me with the means of acquiring——

Of

Of acquiring what?

Your characteriſtical diſcernment. It has been the ſtudy of my life to read the characters of all around me: and I find I am a mere child at the art. Diſcover to me the grounds—the principles you conduct yourſelf upon.

Riſe, Sir, I could anſwer your queſtions without that poſture, but they ſurpriſe me: you are certainly as able to form a judgement as myſelf.

Did you not think, my dear Lucy, he was going to make love to me?—I was a little palpitated; but you ſee he knew better: It would not have been in character: but as poorly as he thinks of himſelf, he is really very ſenſible and penetrating. I gave him my ſentiments on the art of diſcernment in reſpect of character: he was exceſſively thankful, ſaid he ſhould conſider them well, and begged I would give him another interview, for his inquiring further into the ſubject: I agreed to it, and ſo we parted. Now don't condemn me, Lucy—Nor ſuppoſe Mr. Cary to be what he ſeems not—I will anſwer for it, he expreſſes his real ſentiments: I have a friendſhip for him; which you will at once ridicule; but I feel within myſelf that the characteriſtical bounds of friendſhip and love, as you call it, are totally ſeparate.

Adieu, my deareſt, I remain for ever yours,

C. CHARLTON.

LETTER XIV.

Sir EDWARD MANSEL to F. MONSON, Eſq.

MY dear Frank, I am ſtrangely perplexed by my affair with Lady Mary: you muſt really aſſiſt me with your friendſhip, or I ſhall not know how to manage it. I have made her ſeveral viſits lately, but met with a reception that aſtoniſhes me: I ever admired her, not only for her beauty, birth, taſte, elegance and ſo forth, but likewiſe for the condeſcenſion of her temper: I never knew any woman more thoroughly obliging: I mentioned to you the affair of the picture, in which a blunder of mine moſt certainly carried an appearance of expecting ſhe ſhould become acquainted with my miſtreſs, and receive her as a companion. Shocking as ſuch a propoſal muſt be, ſhe nevertheleſs took it with amazing temper, and teſtified no uncommon ſurpriſe: but now—Zounds! what a change! as proud and inſolent as the devil; I proteſt if I did not love her paſſionately, I ſhould from one viſit have hated her. All the airs of quality moſt outré. Reproached me with my propoſal to her (as ſhe took it) in the ſharpeſt terms—ridiculed the high opinion I have of cheſs, in the moſt cutting manner: in ſhort, I

was

was transfixed to an abſolute puppy with ſurprize. But you ſhall hear a little of her ſpirit, raiſed by a new attachment, it ſeems.

My dear Lady Mary, you ſeem to—to be a little diſcompoſed to-day—I fear ſomething unlucky has happened to ruffle your temper.

Ruffle my temper indeed! Your ideas, Sir Edward, are ſtrangely plebeian: people of quality never ſuffer any thing to ruffle their temper. Whatever is done to them, their contempt, not their anger, is moved.

I hope, Lady Mary, I have given no cauſe to———

Oh! Sir, I really had you not in my thoughts:—I was thinking in what an elegant manner the Count de la Monière was dreſſed at Lady Snatchit's rout laſt night—he———

I know nothing of the Count, madam. I never heard of him before.

I imagined as much, Sir; people in certain ſpheres of life know ſcarce any thing of the moſt faſhionable people. The count is—

Is he a cheſs player?

Mercy upon me! what a queſtion! He is, Sir, a man of quality; which I begin to think is incompatible with ſuch hum-drum nonſenſe as cheſs.

Hum-drum nonſenſe! Lady Mary, your ideas———

Are elegant—are faſhionable—are ſuch as be-

come a woman of my blood—No wonder you do not reliſh them, Sir.

This count, I ſuppoſe, reliſhes them: he is an intimate of yours perhaps?

The count is intimate with every body of faſhion; and I know no woman of quality he is more polite to than myſelf.

You have met him often, I ſuppoſe?

Yes, he is too faſhionable not to be met with every where.

He viſits you?

Moſt certainly.

And is very gallant to you?

He is a man of faſhion, and knows how to entertain the women.

Surely, Lady Mary, you tell me all this to give me pain!

To give *you* pain! Prithee, Sir, what are your reaſons to ſuppoſe I once thought of you? Not I, in good truth: the Dutcheſs of Day-break's cruel ſans prendre vole was in my head, not you. She put me out of ſuch a hand, but you ſhall hear it, I had———

Not I indeed, madam. Your levity is ridiculous, and tends not to preſerve my love, I can aſſure you——

Oh! hideous! your love! why did ſuch a plebeian cheſs-player as you think of loving *me?* I am aſtoniſhed. Perhaps you thought I was in love with you too!

This

This rallery does not become you, madam: I have reaſon to expect ſomething different.

Really, Sir Edward, the gravity of your countenance reſembles ſo much the phizes of the old fellows in my father's tapeſtry, that you make me yawn. Indeed I expect the count here, and he will enliven me.

Mighty good, madam, I will take my phiz from you, nor ſhall you be troubled with it again ſoon.

You are vaſtly obliging, Sir.

Now, what is your opinion of this treatment, my friend? Is it not a ſtrange contraſt to what I met with lately? This damnable count ſeems to have turned her head: by heavens, I ſhall cut his throat: fool that I am, to care one farthing about a woman that is ſo inconſiſtent and inſolent! I ought to treat her with the contempt I meet with, and I doubt not, I ſhall ſoon bring myſelf to it. But let me have a line from you—I want your opinion. I have not ſeen poor Lucy ſince my quarrel with her; nor Jefferſon ſince I diſpatched him to make love to her: but I believe I ſhall pay her a viſit, and ſee if ſhe receives me as her Ladyſhip has done. As I may poſſibly go down to-morrow, I will not ſeal up this 'till I return, that I may give you an account of my viſit.

* * *

I have been at Eppingſwell: the world I think

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* * *

I have been at Eppingſwell: the world I think

is turned upſide down: I ſhall not, by and by, know a rook from a biſhop. When I came to Lucy's I deſigned to ſee her, but was anſwered by the maid, that her miſtreſs was gone. Jefferſon, thought I, has made quick work with her —However, up ſtairs I went, and found the dining-room in no ſmall diſorder. I queſtioned the maid about it. When ſhe went? how? with whom? &c. and found ſhe was gone no further than the Parſon's of the pariſh, one Mr. Thomas. That ſhe had been there ſome time, and left word with the maid, that ſhe ſhould never return, and that ſhe might diſpoſe of herſelf as ſhe pleaſed: all this I thought very odd— but by the wench's heſitation, I apprehended ſhe had orders relative to me, which having neglected to execute, ſhe kept to herſelf. I found on the table, the ſettlement I had made on her; every thing was enigmatical. I determined, however, to go immediately to her new habitation: I was conducted into the parlour; and had a good opinion of the parſon, for there was a cheſs-board with the men ſtanding by it, as if ſomebody had been at play. Mr. Thomas came in, he accoſted me civilly, which I anſwered with enquiring if he ever played at that noble game—to which he replied in the affirmative. I begged a game with him. Down we ſat; he play'd tolerably—ſeemed to have a reliſh for it, and was he in practice, would, I believe, ex-

ce

cel at it. We play'd nine or ten games, and then I took my leave, thanking him for the entertainment. I had half way returned, when I recollected the buſineſs of my viſit, which I had totally forgot: an inattention I am not often guilty of. I immediately returned: ſaw him again, and aſked if he knew Miſs Watſon?

Know her, Sir? yes.

I hear ſhe is at your houſe, Sir?

She is now above ſtairs, Sir.

May I deſire to ſpeak with her.

To be ſure, Sir. *(and was going, but returning)*

May I aſk the favour of your name, Sir?

Sir Edward Manſel.

I ſhall carry her no meſſage *(with ſurprize and anger)* from you, Sir Edward.

Why not?

Becauſe ſhe is determined to have no farther connection with you.

But I *muſt* ſpeak to her.

Not in this houſe, Sir.

Mr. Thomas, I do not underſtand what you——

Sir Edward, you need not give yourſelf the trouble to put on an angry countenance to me: I abhorr the very idea of your treatment of ſo valuable a young lady: it was an open contempt to all religion, law, or the common rights of mankind.

None of your preaching to me, Sir.

And none of your company here, Sir. You may leave my houſe as ſoon as you pleaſe.

Methinks you are very inſolent.

It may be ſo, Sir: but I had rather you ſhould think ſo, than imagine your title or eſtate is ſufficient to gild, in my eyes, crimes of the darkeſt hue.

I inſiſt upon your letting her know that I deſire to ſpeak with her.

I will do no ſuch thing: I know the ſight of you can give her nothing but pain: you had better reſtore her to her parents, from whom you ſtole her, than come here to inſult her with your preſence.

I tell you, inſolent prieſt——

Out of my houſe, deceiver——

And with that, fairly drove me out of doors. I was in a confounded paſſion, but in vain: this parſon it is plain is become her protector, ſhe has had the art I ſuppoſe to make him a ſtaunch friend; and he in his godlineſs, has perſuaded her to ſee me no more. I returned to Lucy's, diſcharged the maid, left my ſervant to ſend the goods to London, and took care of the ſettlement. I was hurt at the fellow's brutality; but I am not ſorry ſhe has fallen into his hands, as he may have merit. I returned neither pleaſed nor diſpleaſed with my viſit; if I continue to think that Lucy's company will be agreeable to me, I will go down and ſee her in ſpite of the parſon; but in the mean time, I ſhall not countermand Jefferſon. Adieu, I remain yours, &c.

E. Mansel.

LETTER XV.

Captain JEFFERSON to Mr. CARY.

IN the firſt place, my friend Cary, as to your project, for that I am ſure will be uppermoſt with you. I have often told you that you are the moſt chimerical fellow in Chriſtendom; eternal ſchemes are breeding in your noddle, which are ſufficient to ruin all Europe. Prithee talk not of planting colonies in Tobago, for I will give you a plan worth two of it: by all means make yourſelf maſter of Miſs Character and her fortune, the latter will enable a fellow of your invention to ſettle the moon: I draw nothing but the outline of the project, you will add the particulars in a minute: ſuch a ſcheme is worthy of you. It is new, it is grand, it will immortalize your name, and render you Emperor of a whole globe, for nothing can be clearer than the unworthineſs of its inhabitants to be left to themſelves.—But to go on with my own recital.

According to the helliſh buſineſs that puppy Sir Edward wanted me to perform, I, in pretending to execute it, determined, if poſſible, to diſcover wherein I could beſt wound him to the quick. Before I ſet out on my expedition I learn't that he was near a marriage with Lady

Mary Sion, a faſhionable woman of quality: and this marriage was I ſuppoſe the chief reaſon for his having nothing more to ſay to my ſweet, that is to be. It immediately occurred to me, that I ſhould, if poſſible, deſtroy ſuch a match, eſpecially if his heart was much ſet upon it; and if I could find any way of vexing him by proper management with his late miſtreſs, ſo as on the whole, to bring him into a wretched ſituation. I did not doubt but I ſhould have an opportunity of completing my revenge—which I am determined never to attempt until I can do it effectually.

In the firſt place, I diſcovered that Lady Mary is a mere female gameſter—a high flying lady of quality, whoſe only purſuit is that of quadrille. I had great reaſon, from my intelligence, to apprehend her only motive for marrying Sir Edward is to transfer ſome old gaming debts to his accompt, and procure a freſh ſupply of caſh for the ſame purpoſe. But on the contrary, I found that he is paſſionately in love with her, and wiſhes for nothing ſo much as to marry her.

It is plain, from hence, that I muſt break off this match if poſſible, and that in the moſt mortifying manner to him I can invent. For this purpoſe, I have begun my plotting. I think you know Philips that was obliged to take up his quarters abroad for ſome time: His old debts

debts were all diſcharged ſome time ago; and he is now come over from Paris under the title of the Count de la Monière, is on the catch I believe for a fortune, which he will infallibly get; for he managed matters ſo well in France that he is now full of caſh; makes a moſt brilliant appearance, and is already admitted into the beſt company in London. None but myſelf and Harry Rymer know his ſecret—you ſee I entruſt it with you—be prudent—but there is no occaſion for a caution.

He paid me a viſit as ſoon as he arrived in town. He mentioned a few of the circumſtances by which he gained a fortune in France, my time will not permit me to write you his adventures now—but you ſhall hear them at ſome other time. He begged I would be prudent and not mention his plan to any but ſuch as I could abſolutely depend upon. My affair with Sir Edward induced me to return his viſit: it was to deſire him in the midſt of his intercourſe with people of quality, to take ſome opportunity of being tender to Lady Mary Sion; that it would oblige me infinitely if he would pretend love for her, and overturn an affair ſhe had with Sir Edward. He promiſed me to perform it moſt effectually, and I believe him, for he is wonderfully improved in his perſon, and has the airs and graces of a man of quality, with all the lively impertinence of the French.

I had

I had no ſooner laid this ſnare than down I went to Eppingſwell, the village where Sir Edward placed Lucy Watſon, his miſtreſs and my wife that was to be—I took up my quarters at an inn, in the character of a ſportſman, (with guns, dogs, &c. and my footman well inſtructed in his leſſon) Mr. Baining, a gentleman of large fortune in Suſſex. On enquiry, I found that ſhe had left Sir Edward's houſe, and was then reſiding at the parſon's of the pariſh, one Mr. Thomas. The talk of the village was, that ſhe had left the houſe ſuddenly, the maid behind her—all the furniture, and her clothes likewiſe—and it was ſaid the parchment in which Sir Edward had ſettled three hundred a year on her: Theſe circumſtances proved to me that they had quarrelled and parted, which I did not know before.

I took the diverſion of ſhooting three or four days, without forwarding my ſcheme—leſt I ſhould ſpoil it through precipitancy. I enquired particularly of my landlord concerning all the gentlemen in the neighbourhood, and found there was one who was rather tenacious of his game; the next day I determined to ſhoot on his grounds, in expectation of meeting with a rebuke, my motive for which was to gain a pretence for viſiting the parſon. I acted accordingly, and was queſtioned by a game keeper rather rudely:

rudely: as ſoon as I got home, I ſent my footman to Mr. Thomas with my compliments, and a couple of brace of partridges. In the afternoon I called on him, and introduced myſelf as follows.

I have not the pleaſure of being known to you, Sir, but I take the liberty of waiting on you to beg a little information relating to the ſportſmen in the neighbourhood, that as I am a ſtranger I may not be guilty of offence.

I am much obliged to you, Sir, for your polite preſent of game.

I beg you would not mention it, Sir; you muſt allow me to ſend you a ſhare of my ſucceſs: It is the leaſt acknowledgement any one can pay to merit ſo well known as yours. You muſt know, Sir, my own eſtate, which is in Suſſex, is very indifferently furniſhed with game; and as I am extremely fond of ſhooting, I take the diverſion in different places, where leaſt offence is taken at it—but I find Mr. Jones in this neighbourhood is tenacious of his game, I ſhall therefore avoid his lands, and ſhould be obliged to you, Sir, if you would give me what little information is in your power, concerning the gentlemen around, that I may not give affront undeſignedly.

Oh! dear Sir! with all my heart: what little I know of the matter is at your ſervice. The gentleman you mention, Mr. Jones, and

Sir

Sir Robert Stevens, whoſe lands lie all to the left, are the only perſons that I ever heard were at all curious of their game. Elſewhere, every perſon ſhoots that pleaſes.

I am much obliged to you, Sir, for the information.

I was going to take my leave, but he aſked me to ſtay dinner with him; I refuſed it, however, adding that I would wait on him ſome other time. This I did, the better to conceal all appearance of deſign.

I ſucceſſively ſent him plenty of partridges, pheaſants, &c. I have juſt received an invitation from him to dinner; which I accepted, and on the day appointed ſhall wait on him. Until which time I will lay aſide this paper.

* * *

Am I alive? do I move? Let me ſee. Can I feel? Heaven and earth, Cary, I am bewitch'd, bedevil'd, tranſmogrified into I know not what —by I know not whom, and I know not how.

I have been at the parſon's, and verily believe I have ſeen an angel. But you ſhall hear.

I waited on him at dinner, no other viſitor but a ſporting neighbour. When dinner was ready, down came Miſs Watſon; I looked at her—Zounds and death! thought I, are you his caſt-off? I will murder him for his taſte. But what's your beauty to mine! Revenge, not love, muſt be in my heart! With the moſt cool indifference

indifference did I ſteel myſelf—on the next look it melted. 'Sdeath! why do I view her thus!—I will look no more. Perdition catch me if I do.—In vain. Her eye beam'd heaven upon my ſoul; I took another glance, but could not ſtand the rays of more than mortal light.——This muſt be a viſion; I am aſleep—I nipt my fleſh to wake myſelf; but only drank new poiſon from the copious ſtream then flowing on my ſoul.

Thus did I vainly argue with my feelings—the tranſcendant beauty blazing before me, unhing'd my very ſoul. Do not condemn your friend unheard—and yet why ſay I that! yes, Cary, condemn and deſpiſe me: I feel myſelf no longer a man. Revenge is no longer the firſt paſſion of my ſoul, I graſp it now in conſequence of my love; not itſelf. Love! did I ſay. Oh! how fallen!

In ſpite of the very hue of melancholy which was ſpread over her countenance and deprived her of a part of her colour, ſhe poſſeſſed the moſt angelic face I ever beheld: but without that placid ſillyneſs which is ſo often the characteriſtic of an angelic face. There is a life and ſoul which animates her features, that give a ſpecimen of what they would be was her mind at reſt. This is the woman that helliſh brute

ſucceeded

ſucceeded with—and now caſts off to the firſt comer. She ſpoke but little; enough however to rivet her chains through my very heart-ſtrings.

You muſt allow me to talk in this ſtile, but you muſt not believe me: I indulge in this prating only to entertain myſelf; it is variety; but as to my being transfixed into a whining puppy—No, no—your friend is not of that kidney———

And yet, Cary, if you was but to behold her!—by heavens all your projects would be abſorb'd in one.

How am I to act in this affair? let what will happen my revenge muſt be gratified: If my friend the count does but break off the match with Lady Mary; and Sir Edward, diſappointed there, returns to his former paſſion for this angelic woman, then I ſhall know how to play my cards. I will give the tormenting ſtings of jealouſy in every quarter; but let him act as he may, I will draw from it the gratification of my love or my revenge.

After dinner, when the women were retired, my brother ſportſman, (Harris was his name) began to rally me on being ſmitten by Miſs Watſon.

Really, Sir, (I replied) that lady ſeems formed by nature to make a conqueſt of every beholder. I am much miſtaken, Mr. Thomas, if Miſs Watſon's face is not to be conſidered as an index to a mind beautiful as itſelf.

Your

Your idea of her is very juſt, Sir. She is a valuable woman, notwithſtanding the peculiarity of her ſituation and the unhappineſs of her fate.

Unhappineſs of her fate! what may that mean, Sir?

Her hiſtory is a pathetic one. It is well known in this neighbourhood; covered with many ſtrong appearances of folly and indiſcretion, which prejudice the world againſt her; I am happy in knowing how much it is miſtaken. Some of my acquaintances are offended at my taking her into my family, but I conſider the ſaving a young creature from deſtruction as an object too important to be neglected on account of ſuch ſcrupulouſneſs.

Your determination is an honour to your humanity, Sir. A thouſand unknown circumſtances might occaſion an unthinking girl to act with indiſcretion without being the leaſt guilty. To conſign over a woman to oblivion for one falſe ſtep, when a thouſand real excellencies abound in her, is a moſt cruel ſeverity. I declare I have no idea that Miſs Watſon is not a woman of as great merit as any of her ſex.

It is a misfortune to her that the cenſorious world will never think ſo—and proves that women cannot be too circumſpect in their conduct.

But ſurely, Mr. Thomas, you will allow it likely that a woman whoſe paſſions or feelings have

have been ſtrong enough to lead her aſtray, may probably poſſeſs virtues of a caſt, ſuperior to thoſe of leſs elevated, but more prudent women.

Certainly, Sir; and I muſt aſſert in juſtice to the lady that now left the room, that I never knew a perſon of juſter ideas—that had better conceptions of propriety, or that knew the value of prudence in a more perfect manner. Never was woman more injured than Miſs Watſon is by thoſe who condemn her in the lump.

Doubtleſs; and her injuries have been ſo great, that I ſuppoſe all mankind are become odious in her eyes. Does ſhe not rail at our ſex, and forſwear any further connections with it?

No, Sir: ſhe has too good an underſtanding not to diſtinguiſh between an individual and a whole ſex; I never heard any ſuch general declarations from her.

Happy then is the man that can make an impreſſion on ſo valuable a heart.

This parſon is a good ſort of fellow, I like him; and the account he gives of this divine girl pleaſes me much. I know not what to do, Cary. If your head would admit any thing but a project, you might think of it, and ſcribble me a ſheet or two. I might poſſibly catch a hint from you that would be of ſervice to me. She has abſolutely enſlaved me; I begin really to reliſh Sir Edward's propoſal, and if I can but turn the

the execution of it in ſome manner, like a dagger to his ſoul, I ſhall be ſatisfied. In the mean time I muſt keep up my acquaintance with the parſon, viſit him as if accidentally, ſometimes ſeem not to think of Miſs Watſon, and gain a footing in his family at all events. Adieu for the preſent; you ſhall hear more from me by and by.

H. JEFFERSON.

LETTER XVI.

FRANCIS MONSON Eſq. to Sir EDWARD MANSEL.

YOur laſt letter, my dear friend, gave me great uneaſineſs. I am extremely ſorry you have met with ſuch a turn in your affair with her Ladyſhip, and more ſo to find you ſo ready to fly down to your old miſtreſs, which looked like a wiſh of renewing a paſſion every way ſo utterly unworthy of you. Let me perſuade you to compare the women; one of faſhion and quality, whoſe alliance will be an eternal honour to you and your family, and will give you all thoſe advantages which I have heard you ſo often declaim in favour of. The other ——but to name them together is ſufficient.

I am

I am ſure your reaſon muſt come in play, on the very idea of the contraſt: think no more of a caſt-off miſtreſs whom you have actually aſſigned over to another man, and who is ſo unworthy of you; but aim all your endeavours at reſtoring yourſelf to Lady Mary's affection, which is only running aſtray a little on account of your want of attention: do not be ſo ready, Sir Edward, to take affronts from her about cheſs—ſhe really laughs at you—I know ſhe is fond of cheſs—but when you have any little quarrel, then ſhe pretends to hate it. Dreſs in a richer manner, more on a par with your fortune: if I had half your eſtate I would drive the count from the preſence of any woman of quality in the kingdom.

But this count appears to me a ſtrange affair: I have aſked ſeveral of my friends concerning him, and they all ſeem to turn up their noſes at him, as ſome foreign ſharper. However ſuch ſuſpicions are not always true; but be he what he may, he croſſes you in an amour of conſequence—your pride is hurt at it, and very juſtly—What remedy? you will ſay. If the caſe was mine I would get rid of him at once; and there is no way of doing that but by running him through the guts yourſelf, or, if you don't like that, to hire ſomebody elſe to do it for you: Jefferſon for inſtance: he is abſolutely devoted to your commands, and would require

require no very conſiderable inducement, by your account of him. Take my word for it, Sir Edward, if you let this coxcomb of a foreigner cheat you of ſuch a woman as Lady Mary, you will live to repent it, in the arms of ſome trull deſcended from a cinder heap. Nothing but this Count, real or pretended, ſtands in your way; and let me further adviſe you, when Jefferſon has challenged and diſpatched him, to be quick in proſecuting your marriage with her ladyſhip; if you omit ſuch an opportunity, you may never meet with another of allying yourſelf to ſo noble a family.

I am very glad to find your old miſtreſs choſe to fly your houſe: but prithee go after her no more: Let Jefferſon by all means marry her; and if it proves an expenſive buſineſs to bring it about, I think you will not regret the money. I ſhould be far, Sir Edward, from preſuming to adviſe you ſo much, was it not a caſe in which I know you are at a loſs and wavering between two opinions: your conduct is of infinite conſequence to your future welfare. I would add more, but expect ſoon to have the pleaſure of your company, when I will explain further.

F. MONSON.

LETTER XVII.

FRANCIS MONSON Eſq. to Lady MARY SION.

YOU muſt excuſe, madam, the freedom of this letter, which I ſhould not trouble you with, were it not for ſome urgent calls for money which I am not able to anſwer. Your ladyſhip doubtleſs knows, that the principal and intereſt of the ſums you have had of me, now amount to ſeven thouſand pounds: It is the great regard I have for you that induced me to hazard ſo conſiderable a part of my fortune on your ſecurities, which you was well informed are bad: the ſame reaſon urged me to accept eleven per cent. of your ladyſhip, at the ſame time that I could command fourteen of the counteſs of Pam. I am at preſent involved in difficulties which require thirteen thouſand pounds to ſmooth. What I ſhall do to make your eleven up that ſum I know not, but the neceſſity is urgent; however, your ladyſhip will be ſo obliging as to refund it immediately, for really I muſt have it.

Your new lover the Count will doubtleſs diſregard ſuch a trifle—and be very happy in an opportunity of ſhowing his politeneſs by furniſhing

niſhing you with the money. This you doubtleſs expect, or I apprehend you would not have been ſo quick in diſpatching a man of Sir Edward Manſel's fortune: you would have met with no difficulties there: but I forget—I am adviſing—and your ladyſhip expreſſes no ſmall contempt at advice from me. After that, ſhall I be ſo imprudent as to adviſe ?—Yes; I muſt: the affection which I have for you will not ſuffer me to keep any thing to myſelf which I think will be of ſervice to you: I know not whether what I am going to add will—but if you liſten to reaſon, I am ſure it muſt—which is ſufficient with me.

This affair of yours with the Count, as he calls himſelf, my dear Lady Mary, will be your ruin: it is twenty to one, but he is a foreign travelling ſharper, of which all the courts in Europe are full; you may be certain he has no more notion of marrying you than he has of the ſultana. If he is no impoſtor, you may be convinced from his manners, that he will not marry at all: an intrigue with a faſhionable woman of quality will be a new feather in his cap, and depend on it, it is all he aims at. If on the contrary, he is an impoſtor, which is by far the moſt probable ſuppoſition, you may be certain he will marry any woman that has a very large fortune, entirely at her own command, and no

other—rank being the laſt thing one of that ſtamp thinks of. But in whatever light the affair is conſidered, your depending on it enough to ſlight Sir Edward is the heighth of imprudence.

No ſooner did you ſend him off in a huff, but down he immediately went to his old miſtreſs, whom he had actually aſſigned over to a dependent that had agreed to marry her—your kindneſs induced him to do that—but on your reverſing your medal he did the ſame, and may poſſibly by this time have countermanded his orders, and keep her on himſelf. There is a vacancy in his heart, the moment you quarrel with him, which the other, or ſome one elſe muſt fill: it depends only on you to prevent it for life. However, Madam, it is highly neceſſary that you ſhould put the Count at leaſt to the trial: you muſt abſolutely have ſeven thouſand pounds immediately, try him therefore; and you will diſcover what his deſigns are: if on employing ſome friend to demand his intentions, he is explicit for marriage, and poſitively proves the reality of a ſufficient ſettlement and pin money, you will then have ſatisfactory grounds to proceed upon; but if he waves ſuch affairs, the contrary will remain equally evident. Let me requeſt of you to conſider of this, and favour me with your anſwer. In the mean time I remain, &c.

F. MONSON.

LETTER XVIII.

Miſs WATSON to Miſs CHARLTON.

NOthing, my dear Kitty, gives me ſo much pleaſure as your friendſhip; it is a correſpondence, which, flowing from pure inclination, takes a tincture from views neither of intereſt nor gratitude. It is in your affection that my ſhatter'd mind ſeeks a repoſe from the miſeries of my wretched fate—the balm of friendſhip muſt cure the wounds of a deluſive paſſion. Muſt cure them, did I ſay?—they are cured: that paradoxical, ridiculous hankering of my heart is over—I ſhall never feel it again. But to proceed with my tale.

My good friend Mr. Thomas, according to his intention, was ſo obliging as to make enquiries concerning the place of my father's reſidence, whether in town or Nottinghamſhire: and found that he was at his ſeat in the latter. This kind friend leaving me with his wife, went to London, and took the Nottingham machine: from thence he took the road to the village, and calling at the alehouſe, enquired whether Mr. or Mrs. Watſon were at home; being anſwered in the affirmative, he walked to the houſe, and deſired to ſpeak with my father:

he was ſhewed into the library; and here I ſhall give you their converſation, as Mr. Thomas reported it to me.

I don't remember ever having the honour of ſeeing you before, Sir; but a particular motive induced me to come down from London, on purpoſe to requeſt your hearing.

Are you now come from town, Sir?

This moment arrived.

Your buſineſs I ſuppoſe then is particular?

It is, Sir. I think you have not ſeen your daughter lately.

No, Sir; nor do I deſire it. I ſuppoſe, from this beginning, that you are come on ſome errand from her.

I come with an intention, at leaſt, Sir, of doing a friendly office: no intereſted motives induced me to take a journey of near an hundred miles, to lay the real caſe of your daughter before you.

I am very ſorry you have taken ſo much trouble for ſo vain a purpoſe; I know her caſe too well already.

That's impoſſible, Sir. Nobody could know her caſe, but very lately, for her ſituation is greatly changed.

Changed! What, I ſuppoſe her keeper is tired of her, and has turned her off, to bring freſh diſgrace on her family in new infamy!

No

No ſuch thing, Sir: ſhe, on the contrary, has left him in ſpite of millions of perſuaſions to ſtay: ſhe has been guilty, but is ſo no longer. She is as ſenſible of the nature of her conduct as any one can be: ſhe repents it in the ſincereſt manner; and utters ſentiments worthy of the beſt of underſtandings.

She may have perſuaded you of all this, Sir, but never will me. I long ſince have renounced her as a child, and I never will revoke it.

Accident has thrown your daughter in my way: ſhe was a pariſhioner of mine, and the moment I knew her hiſtory, and was convinced of her repentance, and ſaw her deſtitute of home (for ſhe had left the houſe of her ſeducer, and likewiſe a ſettlement of three hundred pounds a year, diſdaining ever more to receive a ſhilling from him) I took her to my houſe, for I ever thought it a moſt cruel proceeding to conſider a young woman that was guilty of one bad affair, as an abandoned creature, fit for nothing but immediate deſtruction: ſuch a conduct is the ruin of thouſands. I gave her an aſylum in my houſe, determining as ſoon as poſſible to ſee her parents, and convince them (I thought it would have been joyful news) that their child was not loſt.

Very good, Sir—I have a proper ſenſe of your humanity—but I am not to be preached into re-

ceiving back as a daughter, an abandoned ſtrumpet—a wretch ſo void of all ſhame as to run away from the houſe of her father into the keeping of a villainous fellow, whoſe character would have deterred a proſtitute. She——

Hold, Sir: Miſs Watſon (I will not call her your daughter, for you are no longer a father) deſerves not thoſe epithets: her errors all lie at your own door: was ſhe the ſtrumpet you term her, not ſhe, but you have to anſwer for it.

What! how!

Careſs'd, humoured and idolized for ſome years by you and her mother ſhe was every thing in your eyes—but when her brother—a ſon and heir came, behold the contraſt—ſhe was neglected—ill treated—rendered a miſerable being by ſo cruel a chance—left in the country to the care of ſervants alone—of all places, her father's houſe the moſt diſagreeable to her. Are we to wonder at what followed?

Sir, let me tell you———

Sir, while I do what I know to be the duty of a chriſtian, I will ſpeak truth to any man, aye though it galls him to the ſoul. I know what I ſay to be fact, and if you give but a moment's reflection to your treatment of your child, conſcience will tell you the blame is your own.

Sir,

Sir, I deſire you will leave my houſe directly.

—What! I ſuppoſe you have taken her into keeping yourſelf, and want money likewiſe ——but——

I deſpiſe ſuch an imputation: my name is Thomas--I am rector of Eppingſwell in Eſſex. I have a wife and family, and Miſs Watſon is at preſent a part of it. Common humanity brings me, not intereſt. She is deſirous of her parents pardon, though ſhe never ſees them more: I think, Sir, you cannot refuſe it.

I've but one word to ſay to you, and that is, I'll hear no more: I know her better than it is poſſible you can; and I am determined never to forgive her.

Let me perſuade you, Sir, to conſider it coolly. This unforgiving temper may one day want——

Your ſtay is in vain, Sir, therefore you may as well return.

Can I ſee Mrs. Watſon?

She is not at home. You would meet with a yet worſe reception with her, I can tell you.

Well, Sir, I take my leave then, wiſhing you may have no reaſon to repent this ſtern conduct.

Such was the kind humanity of my good friend, and ſuch the unkindneſs of my unre-

lenting father! Unrelenting, did I ſay? no; I forget myſelf, it is but a juſt chaſtiſement for my loſs of that common virtue, without which no woman deſerves even pity. My father has no fondneſs for me, but he is juſt: I ſhall ever acquit him of treating me unworthily. I have forfeited all title to parental affection, ſhall I therefore accuſe my parents of a want of it?

The good Mr. Thomas returned immediately; he repo:ted this converſation to me: and I give it you freely, without apology for writing the unmerited praiſes he beſtowed on me. On the concluſion of his account, he addreſſed me in the following manner.

Do not be unhappy, Miſs Watſon, at my not meeting the wiſhed-for ſucceſs, in this little negotiation. Your father will not liſten to reaſon; he is too ſtrongly prejudiced at preſent, but the time will come when his inexorable conduct will appear to him in very different colours. At preſent make yourſelf eaſy, and confide in me: do not fill your mind with any groundleſs reflections on your being troubleſome here, you can in nothing diſoblige me ſo much; but let me have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing you happy.

Heavens! Mr. Thomas, in what manner ought I to expreſs my gratitude? The obligations under which I lie to you, are ſo great that my whole life can never repay them: de-

ſire

ſire any thing of me but a determination to remain a burthen on you—that is what I ſhall never conſent to.

Alas, my dear Kitty, what am I to do? you muſt give me a little advice. Lay aſide for one moment, the thoughts of any thing characteriſtical, and give me your opinion what ſtep I had beſt take. I can work extremely well, but that I fear will not maintain me in the country: it would in London, but I am determined never to go near it: I ſhould be liable to a million of inſults, for it would be impoſſible to remain ſo concealed there as not to be ſeen by ſome one or other that knew me. As I cannot therefore depend upon my work, I know of nothing but ſervice: the difficulty of which is to find a proper family to get into. As to remaining here, I cannot by any means bring myſelf to think of burthening Mr. Thomas ſo much. Several circumſtances muſt combine in a place for me: I muſt be able to board my dear little girl near me, for I could not part with her for the univerſe; I ſhould therefore be under a neceſſity of paſſing for a widow. Juſt heaven! what conſequences flow from vice! As to being far parted from my little Lucy, I cannot bear the thought of that: for I have a fondneſs for her that exceeds every thing I could have formed an idea of. If I could meet with a grave elderly

family the miſtreſs of which wanted an upper maid, and ſituated in a village where I could put my little girl to board, it would be the beſt thing I could determine on; but let me know your ideas of it, my dear.

* * *

A gentleman, a ſlight acquaintance of Mr. Thomas's, has been here and behaved in a manner very particular to me, and very diſpleaſing. A Mr. Baining, a Suſſex gentleman, come into this neighbourhood for ſporting; he dined once before at Mr. Thomas's, and ſtared rather rudely at me: I ſuppoſe he had heard my tale. At his laſt viſit he took ſeveral opportunities of appearing very tender to me, which I put off in the beſt manner I was able; but in the afternoon he ſingled me out in the garden, and began a converſation that by no means pleaſed me.

I am informed, Miſs Watſon, that one Sir Edward Manſel has had the villany to treat you in a manner unbecoming your incomparable merit.

I muſt deſire, Sir, you will neither name that perſon to me, nor the farce of my incomparable merit.

Really, madam, I am in earneſt.

I beg, Sir, I may have no converſation on ſuch ſubjects.

For

For heaven's ſake, Miſs Watſon, hear me a few words.

The fewer the better.

Your worthy friend, Mr. Thomas, cannot reſent your wrongs; his profeſſion prevents him; but if Sir Edward has behaved to you in any reſpect contrary to his word, I beg you will inform me of it; I am determined to puniſh him, or die in the attempt.

Oh! Sir, I make no ſuch requeſt; I am very far from wanting any perſon puniſhed for my follies.

Name but the word, madam, and I bind myſelf to run him through.

This is very ridiculous, Sir.

Do not ridicule me, for a frown from you pierces me to the ſoul.

You will excuſe my hearing——

No, madam; you muſt not leave me ſo. Give me leave to expreſs, in a few words, the ardent deſire I have to ſerve you—my life itſelf, Miſs Watſon, is at your ſervice.

You muſt be very ſenſible, Mr. Baining, what anſwers muſt come of courſe from me to ſuch ſpeeches. I am much obliged to you for your good wiſhes, but muſt deſire no further converſation on this——

I was walking off, but he ſtopped me, and taking hold of my hand, would not let me ſtir.

Give

Give me but one kind word—leave me not thus—you muſt not, you ſhall not leave me, why will you not——

This is very ſtrange, Sir, that you will have me requeſt you to kill another perſon, or not be ſatisfied.

No, no; I mean not that—but believe me, moſt amiable woman, that———

Unhand me, Sir, I muſt depart.

Cruel Miſs Watſon: by all your ſiſter angels then I ſwear, that the love I bear you———

No more, Sir. I———

Hear me one moment. Give me an inſtant's hearing, and I will be ſatisfied.

Be ſpeedy then.

I know, madam, every particular of your hiſtory:—Nay, bluſh not, for I honour you, even for your faults. Believe me, when from my inmoſt ſoul, I ſwear I love you to diſtraction: accept my hand and heart; you ſhall find me as tender a friend as an affectionate huſband. Do not for heaven's ſake ſlight me; I will be the kindeſt father to your dear little Lucy that you can wiſh for; look with eyes of forgiveneſs on my paſſion—do not drive me to deſpair.

Mr. Baining, hear my irrevocable determination, in two words: Never more will I have connection with any man whatever.

Eternal

Eternal faith will I immediately ſwear at the altar.

I know too well the nature of my crimes, to ſuffer any man to connect himſelf with them; had I ever ſuch an inclination for a union, I never would engage in one. The well meaning man that wiſhes for a domeſtic companion, expects the comforts that reſult from innocence and a mutual affection: there is not a man in the world will meet with either from me.

Incomparable woman! ſpeak not, for every word that drops from thoſe angelic lips is more than human. Do not baniſh me from your ſight—do not determine to be deaf to as ſincere and warm a paſſion as ever man conceived.

I ſpeak to you, Sir, with openeſs and freedom, that you may at once ſee the impoſſibility of ſuch a thing. I tell you with the utmoſt ſincerity, that I am determined never to marry.

Would to heaven you had ſpoke nothing but abſurdities, and given me a ſpecimen of a hateful mind rather than an angelic one, I had then met with ſome conſolation; but to be rejected for reaſons, which add ſo highly to my opinion of you, to be anſwered No, in a manner which charms me, Oh! too cruel woman.

You have heard my reſolution, you muſt, therefore, excuſe my ſaying any thing further.

You

You muſt not leave me yet—for heaven's ſake promiſe me———

Nothing, on my word.

Only to make me happy in another interview.

On no account whatever.

At leaſt permit me to hope——

Nothing concerning me. If you are prudent, Mr. Baining, never think more of me.

Impoſſible. You muſt allow me to love and admire you, whatever may be the conſequence, I ſhall think of nothing elſe. Suffer me to make propoſals to Mr. Thomas.

My reſolution is fixed. Your propoſals therefore will be abſurd.

Be it ſo, madam; but I muſt do it.

On his leaving the houſe, I told Mr. Thomas he had been ſpeaking to me in a ſtile which I did not at all approve, and mentioned a deſign of converſing with him concerning me; and begged of him not to give any ear to him, that he might not find the leaſt encouragement. I likewiſe told him that I ſhould be very glad if he would always let me know when he expected him, as I was determined not to ſee him any more. To which he replied, he would certainly do as I deſired.

This precaution was, however, inſufficient, for a day or two after, I found myſelf alone with him in the garden, without ſeeing him

two

two minutes before he ſpoke: he immediately accoſted me——

Madam, I hope you will——

Mr. Baining, I will hear nothing concerning the affair you mentioned to me before.

Miſs Watſon, I conjure you, not to leave me until I have fully explained my meaning. Tell me, I beſeech you, the objections you have to liſtening, at leaſt, to my honourable propoſals.

I did tell you my objections, Sir; but if they are inſufficient, I do not think myſelf obliged to name more: I poſitively will hear no more of this affair.

Your own terms ſhall be mine in every reſpect: make me but your huſband, and——

Your ſervant, Sir, I muſt be gone.

In the afternoon Mr. Thomas told me he forced him to hear his propoſals, which were thoſe of marriage, and any ſettlement he thought reaſonable: but I anſwered him in one word, I never would marry, on any account whatever.

I don't recommend Mr. Baining, madam, for I know nothing of him; but your reſolution never to marry, is not one I ſuppoſe which you are abſolutely certain of keeping.

Indeed it is, Sir.

Why ſo, Miſs Watſon?

I think for a very good reaſon, Sir. No man can be agreeable to me; but if any was ever

ever ſo much ſo, I could not think of ſuffering him to connect himſelf with ſuch a caſt-off, abandoned——

Hold, Madam: your ſentiment has merit, but it may be carried too far. Very great crimes loſe themſelves in the repentance; and even render the perpetrator more worthy in ſome few caſes, than he could otherwiſe be—or, more properly ſpeaking, *diſplay* his merit more. If you had not committed faults, Miſs Watſon, I might have lived long with you without knowing your mind: believe me, there are many men, who would be ten times more ſtruck with your ſentiments of your own faults, than any that would have aroſe in your mind, had you been faultleſs; from whence you muſt allow me to conclude, that your determination is not well founded.

It may be ſo, Sir—but if I do not think it myſelf, it will prove no motive with me: I never ſhall think it, I do aſſure you, and therefore determine as I have done.

I would have you in every thing act in the manner which will prove moſt agreeable to yourſelf. If you are happy ſingle, I aſſure you I would not adviſe you to change your opinion.

Thus, I think, I have prevented any future trouble from this quarter, during the little time I ſhall

I ſhall ſtay here, for I ſhall put my ſcheme of going to ſervice into execution as ſoon as poſſible; in the mean time I remain, yours, &c.

L. WATSON.

LETTER XIX.

Miſs CHARLTON to Miſs WATSON.

I Received my dear Lucy's moſt obliging letter, but the contents diſpleaſe me greatly. What a father muſt you have! he is a character I am ſure; to have no more bowels for ſuch a daughter as you, inexorable wretch! As to your dernier reſource of going to ſervice, indeed, my deareſt, it will by no means do: it is full of difficulties, and at the ſame time would not anſwer your purpoſe—Depend upon it, you are not formed in ſo ſupple a manner as to be able to change from one ſphere of life ſo abruptly to another. But where did you ſuppoſe my friendſhip would ſleep? could you be ſo unkind as to imagine that I ſhould ſuffer you to be ſo reduced as to make ſervice neceſſary: no, my dear friend, you ſhall partake with me in whatever I can command, and I hope it will be ſufficient to maintain

maintain you much better than ſervice ever will. I incloſe you a bill of ten pounds, my deareſt, it is all I can ſpare at preſent—but be ſure you remember not to ſtuff your next letter with a ſyllable like a thank, for if you give me one for ſuch pelf, and not a thouſand at the ſame time for every word my pen forms, you will be greatly changed: I flatter myſelf you like my letters better than any thing I can ſend in them; and will always be more ready to thank me for one than the other.

You muſt promiſe me that you will remain exactly as you are; or at leaſt not leave your good friend Mr. Thomas, without giving me timely notice of it; for I have two or three houſes in my eye, wherein I believe you can be boarded, and your little Lucy, agreeably.

You muſt allow me to repeat what I have often ſaid before, and that is, you act more in character than any perſon I know: you are involved in difficulties of various kinds, and meet with many unexpected circumſtances, but you are characteriſtic in every thing—Had you liſtened to that of Mr. Baining, you muſt have forgot yourſelf; it would not have been you. Don't miſunderſtand me, I do not mean that there would be any impropriety in your marrying—far from it—but had he been worthy of

you,

you, you would have drawn him out in full view, a very different portrait from what you give of him—which is a mere nothing.

As to my own ſituation at preſent, I have involved myſelf I know not how, with Mr. Cary, in a connection of friendſhip which is uneaſy to me as I am obliged to indulge it as it were by ſtealth: my father is as warm as ever in favour of Mr. Hinchley, and my contempt increaſes for him every day. I hope, my dear Lucy, you will not condemn my conduct in reſpect to Mr. Cary; for you, not knowing him, cannot be ſo good a judge of his character as I am. He deſired me ſome time ago, to favour him with a walk, that he might converſe with me a little about the characters of a new comedy he brought me; and I agreeing to it, we had a good deal of converſation, in which I muſt do him the juſtice to ſay, that he ſhowed an exceeding juſt way of thinking, and proper ideas of the characters of mankind. But he likewiſe took an opportunity of expreſſing ſo uncommon a regard for me, that I could not well miſunderſtand him, and a little repented that I had taken the walk with him, which certainly was not altogether the thing. He ſeemed very unhappy on account of my father's partiality for Mr. Hinchley.

You

You know not, my dear Miſs Charlton, how miſerable I am at your father's being ſo very deſirous of marrying you to ſo unworthy a man as Hinchley.

You miſerable at it, Mr. Cary!

Yes, madam: I cannot be otherwiſe: ſo profound a regard as I have for you, it cannot be indifferent to me. Of all the women I ever met with, none ever made me ſo ſenſible of the ſex's value. Can you ever think of marrying him, Miſs Charlton?

I am determined never to hear of it, Sir. And I am certain my father loves me too well to think of obliging me to do it. I would not have him, for the univerſe.

Oh! Miſs Charlton! could you but imagine with what a warmth of affection I enjoy your company—could you but——

Mr. Cary, I am obliged to you for having ſo good an opinion of me, but ſuch particular converſations were by no means the deſign of this walk.

True, my dear Miſs Charlton, but you muſt allow me, now I have an opportunity, to make uſe of it, in giving you ſome idea of the unbounded reſpect I have for you. For heaven's ſake, madam, permit me to aſſure you——

Sir—I——

How much——

Mr.

Mr. Cary, you——

I cannot help the declaration, how much I love you!

Sir; this——

Do not condemn me, moſt amiable of women, for having the happineſs of perceiving ſuch rare and incomparable merit as yours; and to perceive is but another word for loving you.

I anſwered him with ſcarce any thing but broken words and palpable confuſion; which was ſo irkſome to me that I finiſhed the walk as ſoon as poſſible: not, however, before he forced a promiſe from me of taking another with him in a day or two.

I was fooliſh enough to be as good as my word; but I cannot explain to you, my dear Lucy, in the bounds of a letter, all my reaſons for taking this ſtep. He immediately renewed the converſation; and I muſt own my weakneſs to you: he drew from me an avowal of a mutual affection. 'Tis paſt, and cannot be recalled; but were it in my power, why ſhould I recall it? his character is conſiſtent, and gives me no reaſon to repent; and I cannot but think I ſhould have acted in contradiction to my own had I refuſed to liſten to him, but been attentive to that creature Hinchley. This meeting drew on another, in which Mr. Cary further explained himſelf.

My

My deareſt Miſs Charlton, your giving me a permiſſion to love you has poured ſuch a balm into my ſoul, that I almoſt feel myſelf in heaven. But, my amiable friend, when will you bleſs me with this fair hand, that I may really call you mine?

Do not mention that, Mr. Cary; I did not apprehend you would ſo ſoon——

So ſoon, my angel! can I be too quick in wiſhing for complete happineſs? I ſhould belie my character if I was not in haſte to make you my wife, moſt incomparable woman!

No flattery, Sir: this affair requires time: you know how much my father———

I know well how eager he is to marry you to Hinchley's eſtate; but you are of a juſter way of thinking: will it be agreeable to you, my life, to be perpetually teazed about him?

Far from it.

Had we not better then cut ſhort all ſuch diſagreeable remonſtrances, as you will undoubtedly meet with, by putting it at once out of any one's power ever to part us more?

It cannot be, Mr. Cary—ſuch precipitations will only———

Why, my deareſt, ſhould we not act from our own feelings, inſtead of receiving our motions like puppets from the ideas of others. Why ſhould we not act characteriſtically?

By

By all means—but——

There can be no real objections. I will immediately write to a friend of mine, to provide me a ready furniſhed houſe at London; there, my love, we may reſide for the preſent: it is better than the country, for every ſtep one takes, every diverſion we go to, preſent us admirable opportunities of remarking the characters of mankind—what a noble way of employing our time!

Your obſervations are juſt; but, Mr. Cary, we muſt wait for———

Wait, my deareſt! there is no neceſſity——we ſhall there frequent the theatres, and make perpetual remarks on the originality of character, which is the ſoul of the drama. Shall you not admire this?

Beyond all doubt; but we muſt have patience.

He uſed a multitude of other arguments, moſt of them good ones, I muſt own, for our marrying directly: but ſuch a conduct I was fully determined to avoid, for many reaſons. I am reſolved to have my father firſt give up all thoughts of Hinchley, or any one elſe, before I agree to Mr. Cary's propoſal—and I likewiſe ſhould conſider it well myſelf, and hear what my dear Lucy has to ſay on it; which I wait impatiently for. I was ſo much afraid of being too precipitate that I inſiſted on his leaving the

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Wait, my deareſt! there is no neceſſity——we ſhall there frequent the theatres, and make perpetual remarks on the originality of character, which is the ſoul of the drama. Shall you not admire this?

Beyond all doubt; but we muſt have patience.

He uſed a multitude of other arguments, moſt of them good ones, I muſt own, for our marrying directly: but ſuch a conduct I was fully determined to avoid, for many reaſons. I am reſolved to have my father firſt give up all thoughts of Hinchley, or any one elſe, before I agree to Mr. Cary's propoſal—and I likewiſe ſhould conſider it well myſelf, and hear what my dear Lucy has to ſay on it; which I wait impatiently for. I was ſo much afraid of being too precipitate that I inſiſted on his leaving the

country for ſome ſhort time, that no unlucky accident might happen, and he has obeyed me, though reluctantly. So, my deareſt, favour me with a line, I beg of you. Adieu, I remain

Yours, &c.

C. CHARLTON.

LETTER XX.

Mr. CARY to Captain JEFFERSON.

MY friend Harry, you rejected my plan—*project* you were pleaſed to call it—and ſubſtituted nothing in its room: never pull down one edifice without erecting another. My affair goes on ſo admirably with Miſs Charlton that I muſt withdraw my offer of making a voyage to the Moluccas; I ſhall ſoon be maſter of a fortune ſufficient to execute that, or any other plan. But I have a little changed my mind, I have gained ſome curious information relative to our new province of Florida: a plantation in it would anſwer prodigiouſly: if I was to ſee you I would explain the particulars. Seven hundred pounds would ſuffice for a beginning, which I can demonſtrate would increaſe

increaſe to eight thouſand pounds a year in nine years; by the cultivation of hemp and indigo. A negro yields twenty pounds a year, clear profit; a little multiplication will prove it to you. I am in haſte at preſent, ſo

Adieu.

F. CARY.

LETTER XXI.

Lady MARY SION to Miſs FANE.

THE laſt time I met you at Mrs. Simpſon's aſſembly, I hinted to you ſomething about Monſon, but had not time to explain. He is juſt the wretch we both knew him to be, but I think he grows yet more avaricious: he is in pain for his money with me, becauſe I give ear to the count. What the extent of my bonds are, I ſcarce know, but he writes to me in a ſtile of impertinence which makes me fear I am too much in his power. I am obliged to keep well with him, and in many things yield to his opinion; but I find at preſent that nothing but my accepting a marriage with that odious fellow Sir Edward, will ſatisfy him, and make him eaſy as to his money. While I ſee this count

with my preſent eyes, that can never be—indeed my affair with Sir Edward is at preſent of a mighty cool temperature: neither on nor off—but as to Monſon, if poſſible I will get out of his clutches: I ſhall have my bonds examined by a lawyer, that I may know at leaſt my ſituation with him. You were more prudent, you have his money, and yet ſnap your fingers at him: he is an egregious miſer, and deſerves nothing but a halter for extortion.

* * *

Heavens! my Harriet! what an affair! The count, confound him! is an impoſtor, he was expoſed laſt night at my Lord E.'s, and I ſuppoſe is gone off to-day: Lady Pickit gave me this intelligence in a note this morning: this is a fine affair for me! now am I the ſlave of this wretch Monſon! What is become of Sir Edward! I muſt make up matters with him at all events——

Tueſday.

Monſon has been with me, full of the count: I, all obedience to his opinion. What a ſituation! Madam, ſaid he, you muſt, at all events, regain Sir Edward; I make no doubt but he is re-eſtabliſhing his old Miſtreſs, if he has not done it already—you muſt immediately about it—regain him or you are undone. I have nothing more to ſay, madam—it muſt be ſo.

Then

Then you muſt give me information exactly, how Sir Edward is ſituated; that I may know how to proceed.

You ſhall have all particulars as ſoon as poſſible.

You ſee, my dear Harriet, how I am ſituated; but he is right—Sir Edward is actually my forlorn hope.

* * *

Monſon has been with me again; Sir Edward, by his account, wants greatly to be reconciled to his miſtreſs, but ſhe is with a clergyman who has taken her under his protection, and refuſes to ſee him; this makes him very unhappy; and Monſon is in no ſmall fear that he may be induced to marry her. That muſt not be, however. I told him I would go down into their neighbourhood under a borrowed name, and diſcover the real ſtate of the caſe; and if the thing was as he deſcribed it, I would at all events manage ſo as to prevent the marriage. He approved my deſign. Adieu, Harriet, yours, &c.

M. SION.

LETTER XXII.

Miſs WATSON to Miſs CHARLTON.

I Received your Letter, my dear friend, and it is with infinite concern that I find you are ſo precipitate with Mr. Cary: it is impoſſible I ſhould abſolutely be able to ſay that he would be an improper match for you; but there are a million of reaſons to doubt it—however, be it as it may, I conjure you to forbear any further promiſes to him, until you at leaſt are informed on good authority, who he is? what? from whence? and ſome other queries I ſhould think a little important; but which you really ſeem to have quite forgot, and if he is not very well known by your neighbourhood, you ſhould not be ſatisfied merely by himſelf, but have proper enquiries made concerning him: I am really very uneaſy to find you embarked ſo deeply in an affair of this kind, with a man of whom it is plain you know ſo little. Excuſe my freedom, Kitty, but the welfare of your future life depends upon your preſent conduct: you may be on the brink of the moſt terrible precipice in the univerſe, and going to leap down it, for want perhaps of even the ſlighteſt enquiry judiciouſly made.

made. At all events, I would make him, were I you, acquaint my father. I am greatly miſtaken if you could not overcome all his objections on the point of fortune; you are an only child, and he is extremely fond of you: depend upon it, you may bring him to agree to the match if Mr. Cary is found to want nothing but fortune—and ſurely, my deareſt, your affection for him cannot be hurt in letting his merit ſtand the teſt of your father's enquiries! Conſider of this, my dear Kitty, and at all events, be not precipitate.

As to my own ſituation, I am, I think, in a plan which is the only one to yield me any tolerable eaſe. I told you before of my ſcheme of going to ſervice in ſome village where I could have my little Lucy boarded: and how much my valuable friend, Mr. Thomas, oppoſed it: his oppoſition reſulted from his extreme kindneſs; but my determination was fixed on grounds too rational to be altered by that; even my dear Kitty's affectionate advice in her laſt letter, muſt not be followed by me: you ſee, my deareſt, that I have not yet thanked you for your obliging gift; I knew you too well to make a parade in my firſt paragraph of my obligations—my ſilence, you will underſtand, whatever ſome might think of it. But, my dear

Kitty, do not from thence draw an inference that my ſilence would again be the conſequence of ſuch another piece of generoſity: this, my friend, is ſufficient for my wants, and I therefore beg of you to extend it no further. I think you know me well enough to act as I deſire. But to return to my own management———

I gained the information I wiſhed for, relative to a ſervice: I found, almoſt by accident, that a lady who lived about fifteen miles off wanted an upper maid: I determined not to mention my intention to Mr. Thomas, but borrowed his daughter's horſe for a ride. He ſeemed ſurpriſed, but offered to attend me, which I refuſed. The lady's name is Strange. I dreſſed myſelf very plainly, rode to her houſe, and deſired to ſpeak with her; being ſhown into her parlour, ſhe preſently appeared.

What is your buſineſs with me, young woman?

I was informed, madam, that you wanted a ſervant, and am come to offer myſelf.

Yes, child, I want a maid to attend myſelf: where did you live laſt?

I was never in ſervice before, madam.

Can you work neatly?

Yes, madam, any thing.

Can you read?

Yes, Madam.

I am

I am glad of that, for my maid always reads to me. Perhaps you can write too.

Tolerably, madam.

Very well, young woman, you give a good account of yourſelf. What wages do you expect?

How long do you purpoſe, madam, to hire me for? I was informed you only wanted a ſervant while in the country; and therefore I offered myſelf: becauſe, madam, I ſhould inform you, leſt you ſhould have any objection, that I have been married, but being left a widow, with a young child, I chuſe to board it in the neighbourhood; a ſcheme which would not ſuit me at London.

No, child, I have no objections of that kind, nor ſhall I live at London at all; ſo my place, in that reſpect, will ſuit you. But your wages?

What do you chuſe to give, madam?

I give eight pounds a year. Will that ſatisfy you?

Extremely well, madam.

I would hire you for a year: when can you come, for I am at preſent in want of you.

Whenever you pleaſe, madam.

Come then in leſs than a week.

So this matter was ſettled, and I returned to my friend, Mr. Thomas's, heartily tired with ſo long a ride. He aſked me if I had taken a very long ride, as I ſeemed ſo much fatigued: I then told him the whole affair, and the good man was much concerned.

You know, my dear madam, that I have often made a tender of my houſe for your reſidence, not only for a ſhort viſit, but as long a ſtay as could be agreeable to yourſelf: I little expected you would have quitted it until you had been fixed advantageouſly in ſome other: but to leave me for going to ſervice! ſurely, Miſs Watſon, you have doubted of the ſincerity of my offer! or I think you could not have been ſo imprudent as to act thus: indeed, my child, your delicacy is too great—rather than be what you alone think a trouble to another; you embark in a ſea of uncertainty; open, I may ſay, to a million of accidental, as well as deſigned embarraſments. Such a ſituation will be no protection to you againſt the ſchemes of wicked men, and you know how lately Sir Edward Manſel almoſt threatened me, for not conducting him to you, even in my own houſe. Let me perſuade you to lay aſide a plan ſo extremely ill judged: and to put more faith in the ſincerity of my friendſhip.

I anſwered the arguments of this moſt humane of mankind as well as I could; and finally inſiſted on the neceſſity of executing my reſolution: the good man would not yield his opinion, and believe me, my dear Kitty, the thought of leaving him hurts me greatly; but the meaſure is abſolutely neceſſary; for I know,

was

was I to ſtay, that the want of ſome proſpect of eaſing him of the burthen of maintaining me might be ſome inducement with me to liſten to propoſals which I ſhould, otherwiſe, in general abhorr: to avoid the very idea of ſuch a circumſtance is ſufficient with me—I need no more.

* * *

Was it only to get out of the way of this Mr. Baining, I ſhould determine to execute my ſcheme, whatever other motives might make me yield to a contrary opinion: he has been here again, and not finding me in the garden, ſent a meſſage to me by the ſervant, requeſting a moment's converſation: I returned an abſolute refuſal: he repeated it again: and I again anſwered him in the ſame manner—at laſt up came Mr. Thomas to deſire I would ſee him if it was only to get rid of him, for he promiſed faithfully never to deſire a ſyllable again, if I gave him an opportunity now, of fully explaining himſelf. I would not refuſe Mr. Thomas's deſire, and accordingly went down, and found the parlour occupied by Mr. Baining alone.

Madam, ſaid he, I tremble at your appearance: I am now to receive my doom at your hands—let me, in the name of heaven, expect mercy!

I underſtand no ſuch expreſſions, Sir—I am come down for no purpoſe whatever but to aſſure you, once for all, that I can have nothing to ſay to you, but merely as a common acquaintance.

Then am I completely miſerable. But I will not long be ſo; I will immediately cut the throat of that villain, Sir Edward; and then finiſh ſo miſerable an exiſtence as my own——

I cannot poſſibly anſwer for your imprudence —have you any thing further to ſay to me, Sir?

Cruel woman! will you leave me thus? Believe me, for heavens ſake! believe me, when I, with all poſſible ſincerity, aſſure you that I love you to diſtraction: that I mean nothing but the moſt honourable marriage, and on your own terms, do not reject—do not kill me with the ſeverity of a refuſal.

My anſwer, Sir, will for ever be the ſame: —I am determined never to marry: it is an abſurdity to ſuppoſe I have not a right to manage myſelf as I pleaſe.

Madam, this cruelty—this contempt is, let me tell you, an inſult upon my paſſion, ſurely you do not mean it?

Indeed, Sir, I mean all I ſay, nor will I hear any ſuch converſation as this, which I find is changing into abſolute impertinence.

Impertinence! you think, then, that my matchleſs

matchleſs paſſion is impertinent? you think I merit your contempt?

I ſtay not here to anſwer your queries, but only to repeat once more, that I will hear no further of an affair which is grown ſo diſagreeable to me. Sir, your ſervant.

This conduct, madam—this ſuperciliouſneſs is not a proper return for the expreſſions of regard I have dropt for you. Methinks———

Mr. Baining, you grow inſolent, I will hear no more.

Yes, madam; you ſhall hear a word or two: your contempt for me—theſe expreſſions of your hatred do not become you; before you offer to make any one ſuch a return, reflect a little on your character and ſituation.

He pronounced theſe laſt words in a moſt ſneering manner: they were very far from hurting me a moment, but the opporunity of leaving him without any further anſwer, as I doubted not, for ever, gave me no ſmall pleaſure: this is the laſt I ſhall hear from him: he grew moſt ungenerouſly reflecting: I, it is true, deſerved ten times more than he could upbraid me with; but the impertinence of its proceeding from ſuch a ſtranger, was monſtrous. This affair thus concluded, I think I ſhall meet with no more obſtructions, but retire from my wor-

thy friend's without any interruption: I will write you again, my dear Kitty, ſoon after my arrival at my miſtreſs's, and in the mean time, remain, &c.

L. WATSON.

LETTER XXIII.

Captain JEFFERSON to Mr. CARY.

I Proteſt, Cary, I ſhould employ this whole ſheet in railing at your confounded projects, which are ſufficient to ruin millions, had I not other matters much nearer to my heart. Hang me for a lamb-killing dog, if I am not treated worſe than any mad cur in the three kingdoms: trod upon, deſpiſed—rejected—contemned.—But if revenge does not follow, my meaſure is full indeed!

You muſt know, that ſcoundrel wretch Sir Edward ſent for me, and after a game or two of cheſs, propoſed to me in plain words to—but you ſhall have the converſation, for it was a curious one: I ſhould repeat to you before hand that to gain an opportunity of being thoroughly revenged on him, I am obliged to appear all flattery and ſubmiſſion to him.

Mr.

Mr. Jefferſon, I think you would ſerve me in any thing———

Doubtleſs, Sir Edward—you can give me no command which I ſhould not with the utmoſt readineſs obey.

May I depend upon you?

Moſt certainly you may, Sir Edward.

Why, indeed, Mr. Jefferſon, I muſt own, you do obey my pleaſure tolerably; but you know I am very bountiful in return, I am very attentive, at the ſame time that you ſerve me, that by doing ſo you ſhall ſerve yourſelf.

Your goodneſs, Sir Edward, I ever acknowledged.

Well, Mr. Jefferſon, the buſineſs I want you at preſent to execute, is a mere trifle. I am affronted in a tender point—you underſtand me———

Sir Edward!——

A villainous impoſtor, who calls himſelf the count de la Monière, has——

He has behaved, I ſuppoſe, in a manner that deſerves chaſtiſement—I will immediately——

My dear Jefferſon, you hit preciſely on the caſe, only cut his throat—that is all.

Cut his throat, Sir Edward!

What—are you ſurpriſed at that? ſurely, there

there are many ways of bringing on a rencontre, and then, you know———

Oh! I comprehend you, Sir Edward; I'll wait for nothing but an opportunity.

I value your merit, Mr. Jefferſon: but how goes your affair with Miſs Watſon?

I cannot boaſt much of my ſucceſs, Sir Edward, but——

Really? ſhe will not liſten to you?—ha!

But I make no doubt of ſucceeding: I have gained free admittance to——

Succeeding! what? does ſhe give you encouragement? Am I diſagreeable to her? What ſays ſhe?

Diſagreeable, Sir Edward! far from it, I am ſure.

Well, but attend to me.

I am all attention.

Do not proceed too quick in that affair: keep yourſelf in your preſent ſituation: contrive always to have admittance; that if I determine the thing to go on, you can proceed on a moment's warning; be only a mere acquaintance for the preſent.

I will be preciſe in my obedience, Sir.

Right. I ſhall not determine whether abſolutely to give her up until you have run the count through: I muſt ſee the effect of his being

being diſpatched before I give you my laſt inſtructions relative to Miſs Watſon.

But, Sir Edward, you will pardon my preſumption—I—I am under an aſſumed character you know at Eppingſwell—a footman and horſes are neceſſary, I muſt watch all Miſs Watſon's motions, and——

True; watch her moſt minutely, that you may be able to give me whatever intelligence I demand.

Theſe things, Sir Edward, are neceſſary, but they are expenſive——

Oh! make yourſelf eaſy, Jefferſon, be but exact in your obedience and I ſhall never expect impoſſibilities—I might as well expect you to beat me at C[illegible]ngh[illegible]n's gambit without giving you the proper piece—as to think theſe things can be done without money. Let me ſee—here are bills for an hundred and fifty pounds—

Sir Edward, you allow me theſe neceſſaries moſt bountifully.

Your fortune is made if you ſerve me with exactneſs.

What a dog! but I will ſmother my indignation, for vain words ſhall not be my revenge. So I was to be a cut-throat for him too! Now tell me, Cary, if I ſhould not be the verieſt milk-ſop that ever God created, if ſuch treatment as this did not rouſe my revenge were I a very worm.

No;

No; I am not ſuch a wretch! I will ſhow the villain of a fellow who prides himſelf ſo much on his eſtate, that low as I am in the world, I am conſiderable enough to hurl vengeance at him. Indeed the very deceiving him alone, the making him ſuch a dupe to my deſigns is no ſmall gratification: I am, every day of my life, carrying on my revenge.

The buſineſs of the count's murder, however, was interrupted by his being blown up and obliged to decamp for France: poor fellow! I am ſorry his ſchemes did not ſucceed better; and his attack on Lady Mary being thus at an end, diſappoints a large part of my plan: however, I muſt make it up in ſome other.

Leaving this brute, I went down to Eppingswell; and here comes the diſaſter of my hiſtory. You may be very ſure that I had no inclination to leave things in ſtatu quo there: as I found Sir Edward wavering between two paſſions, with ſome ſigns of Miſs Watſon's having the muſt powerful influence over him, I determined at all events, to puſh her vigorouſly on the ſubject of my own unparalleled paſſion: 'tis true indeed ſhe had not hitherto given me cauſe to triumph; but I was nevertheleſs full of hope. I waited again upon her, but met with, if poſſible, a colder reception than before. This

provoked

provoked me not a little; I appeared in the character of a man of fortune, and yet to be ſo rejected! I thought it paſſing ſtrange and confoundedly grating to my pride. I went again, but was anſwered truly that we did not chuſe to appear, and it was with the utmoſt difficulty I I got ſight of her. At laſt, however, I did, but, my dear Cary, I paid very dear for my importunity. Hang me for a fool, to make myſelf the ſport of the caſt-off trull, even of my greateſt enemy!

All that I could expreſs of ſincerity, love, honourable intentions, with a long train of et cetera's, had no more effect than if I had attempted to whiſtle down a brick wall. She even grew contemptuous—ſpurned me from her with all the rigid haughtineſs of the moſt conſummate virtue. Heavens and earth! my friend! Think of this!—could you have conceived it? Such treatment made me grow warm; I expoſtulated with her on her conduct in pretty ſevere terms, and ſhe anſwered me with tenfold inſolence: ſhe left me in a paſſion, after openly expreſſing her contempt for me, and proteſting ſhe would never ſee me more.

Could your coldneſs bear this, Cary? Yes; you will tell me, it is a matter beneath my notice, and that I ſhould forget it; but I am of a very different opinion; I could as ſoon lay myſelf

myſelf down to be trod upon as ſuffer ſuch a return to be made with impunity to my love—Love! did I ſay? No:—may all the powers of blackneſs ſeize me if it does not turn to deadlieſt gall. Deſpiſed—rejected—inſolently treated by the vile minx! Is this the return my affection met with! and from ſuch a one too! confuſion!—but I will be revenged. Now, I may expect to ſee that fell monſter of all iniquity, that helliſh fellow Sir Edward—rioting again, and at my expence too, with this matchleſs woman. Confuſion ſeize them! No; it ſhall not be at my expence, for I'll tear all that's tender from my ſoul, and nought but fury ſhall inhabit there!——

* * *

I have been again at Thomas's—not to fawn, miſtake me not, but to tell her in the voice of reſenting hatred what I think of her behaviour; but ſhe is gone—left the houſe—I immediately enquired where ſhe was, but could get no information—they did not know—confound their lying: but I will find her out if ſhe's hid in the deſerts of Arabia: never ſhall ſhe thus eſcape my revenge. Farewell, yours, &c.

H. JEFFERSON.

LETTER XXIV.

Miſs WATSON to Miſs CHARLTON.

Walton.

THank heaven, my dear Kitty, I am now fixed, in what I hope will prove a very tolerable way of life, and infinitely more ſatisfactory to me, than living a conſtant burthen to ſo humane and valuable a man as Mr. Thomas. Indeed his benevolent kindneſs was ſo great that the thoughts of continuing with him without a proſpect of putting an end to an expence, which I dare ſay was not at all ſuitable to his fortune, hurt me infinitely, and made me wiſh ardently to find ſome ſuch place as I am now in. Mrs. Strange received me in a kind manner enough; aſked after my child, which I had placed with a labourer's wife in the village, and ordered me to attend her in about an hour to read. Our family is very ſmall, conſiſting only of another maid who acts as cook and houſemaid, and a lad in livery; nobody lives with her; ſhe told me ſhe had very few acquaintances in the country, and leading ſo ſolitary a life, ſhould often employ me to read to her. Mrs. Strange appears to be four or five and thirty;

thirty; is tall and genteel, her face rather handſome than otherwiſe, her complexion good for that age, and her eyes expreſſive; ſhe has much of the general appearance of a woman of faſhion.

I waited on her before dinner, to read. There, Lucy, ſhe ſaid, take that volume of Gil Blas, you will ſee by the double, where I left off—I had not been reading above a quarter of an hour before ſhe interrupted me ——

Upon my word you read very well. I think you told me your father was a little tradeſman at Mancheſter; did he teach you?

Yes, madam.

And how long has your huſband been dead?

About a year and half, madam.

Have you no dependance left you on any thing but ſervice?

None, madam.

Well, I dare ſay you will behave ſo as to make me your friend—am very glad to find you can read ſo well; I am very fond of being read to.

She often queſtioned me about my life and family, and other trifling particulars, to which I anſwered pretty conſiſtently. Indeed our converſations were in general ſo long, that between them and reading to her I ſpent nearly all my time with her; for the only viſitors ſhe has had ſince I have been with her are the rector of the

pariſh, and a Mr. Drummond who is called in the neighbourhood the ſquire, they have been here twice.

Theſe are unintereſting particulars to you, my dear Kitty, but I judge of your feelings by thoſe of my own breaſt; and as I know how much I am intereſted in every circumſtance, however ſlight, that concerns you, I flatter myſelf thoſe relating to me are not entirely indifferent to you.—I ſhall not have an opportunity of ſending this letter to the poſt office until next week, I ſhall therefore keep it unſealed, that in caſe any thing further ſhould occur, I may have an opportunity of adding it.

* * *

Juſt heaven! my dear Kitty! what can this be! I am in aſtoniſhment! terrified to death! I know not what to write, nor can I imagine the meaning of my receiving ſuch uſage. Who in the name of God can I have offended ſo much as to induce them to give themſelves any trouble to be revenged on me! I am amazed at receiving ſuch treatment—I ſcarcely have ſpirits to give you a recital of this ſtrange adventure. Oh! my dear little infant! my unhappy Lucy! what miſeries may you be liable to, with none

to

to protect you! Good God! what do I feel! I cannot write, I muſt lay aſide my pen——

* * *

I will give you a little recital of this ſtrange and cruel adventure, though I know not when I ſhall have an opportunity of ſending the letter.

A ſtrange ill looking fellow called once or twice upon my miſtreſs, and from what ſhe told me I gathered that his buſineſs with her concerned two little nieces of hers at London, to whom ſomething had happened. The day before he came for the laſt time, ſhe told me I muſt get myſelf ready for a journey to London to bring down her two nieces directly, for ſhe was informed that the woman who had the care of them behaved very ill to them; So be ready to-morrow morning, adds ſhe, when Mr. Collyer will come again with a chaiſe to carry you to the woman's houſe; he cannot return, ſo you muſt come back alone with them; here are five guineas for your expences back.

The next morning this Mr. Collyer accordingly came in a poſt chaiſe; I ſtept into it without ſuſpicion, and off it drove. This fellow had an uncouth appearance. His face was as black as a chimney ſweeper's, with a monſtrous beard, and a pair of whiſkers which gave him a horrible appearance; he had likewiſe a large black

black wig, which added to his frightfulneſs, and he covered all the reſt of his body with a very large dark brown horſeman's coat. We had very little converſation by the way, but that little was on his part in a voice as deep as the grunt of a hog: I liked nothing about him but his ſilence—his tongue by no means offended me.

In the evening we arrived at London, and driving a conſiderable way through the new road ſtruck at once down a ſtreet, of which I knew nothing, and paſſing through one or two others, the chaiſe ſtopped at the door of a large houſe; it was opened, and my conductor handed me in: a faſhionable looking, well dreſſed, middle-aged woman, was at the ſtairs foot, and conducted me up without ſaying ſcarcely any thing—ſhowed me through two or three paſſages into a very large and elegantly furniſhed room, without any windows except a large octagon lanthorn in the center of the ceiling.

I ſuppoſe, madam, you know the buſineſs which brings me to town?

Perfectly well, madam.

I hope Mrs. Strange's nieces are——

Mrs. Strange's nieces! ha! ha! ha!

What!

Prithee, my dear lady, let us hear no more of Mrs. Strange's nieces. I can ſcarce keep from laughing at you.

Am I deceived then?

Yes indeed are you: and much for your good I can tell you; what! do you think the world will ſuffer a girl of your figure to be the attendant of Mrs. Strange!—and come to ſee after her nieces! ridiculous!

I am in amazement at this villany. Where is Mr. Collyer?

Oh, you will ſee him, never fear.

And pray, madam, who are you?

My name I ſuppoſe you mean; Fletcher, at your ſervice.

Well, Mrs. Fletcher, then pleaſe to open your doors that I may walk out.

Not in ſuch haſte, miſs. You muſt ſtay here ſome time, I can tell you.

Am I a priſoner then?

Why, as to a priſoner—that, methinks, is a very improper term for ſo agreeable a life as you will lead here——but———

But what!

Why, if you mean by it being prevented from leaving the houſe,—'tis even ſo.

This treatment, Mrs. Fletcher, is—

Come, miſs, I am your friend, and will undeceive you in a multitude of falſe notions in a minute. Put on no threatning looks, for they are ridiculous: here you are, and here you muſt

in

in that reſpect wait my pleaſure. Be not at all alarmed, for you will be entertained in an agreeable manner, make no remonſtrances, for they will be all in vain—take what you find and be eaſy—if you don't know when you are well off, it is charity in other people to manage you—pleaſe to come a moment with me———

I followed her out of the room, and going preſently into another,

This (continued ſhe, ſhowing me a dreſſing room and bed-chamber) is your apartment, live in it quietly, and with chearfulneſs—this houſe, madam, is dedicated to gaiety, and croſs looks will by no means become it. There is a bell when you want attendance.

Saying this, ſhe left me: I would have followed her, and did a little way, but preſently found the door at the end of the paſſages locked.

I returned, flung myſelf into a chair, and in a ſhower of tears gave ſome vent to the miſery I felt: I was full of the moſt dreadful apprehenſions, and expected nothing, in ſo uncommon a ſituation, but the worſt of uſage. My dear little Lucy, left with almoſt I knew not who, and now without dependance, made my heart bleed at the reflection. As to Mrs. Strange, I knew not what to think of her—appearances were ſtrongly againſt her—for it was

very improbable that that fellow Collyer ſhould bring me here without her knowledge: indeed it is impoſſible—and yet, what could be her motive! In ſhort, I was bewildered in wretchedneſs and uncertainty.

Finding myſelf exceſſively faint, I rung the bell: a maid ſervant appeared—I deſired ſhe would bring me a glaſs of water: ſhe immediately obeyed me; and I then took the opportunity of queſtioning her a little; I avoided aſking her any thing which I apprehended would give her ſuſpicions, but putting on as lively and contented a face as I could, What is your ſupping hour, child? I think I am a little hungry.

Would you have any thing to eat, madam?

No; I am not in a hurry—your family hour will do for me; that's late, I ſuppoſe, *(with a ſmile)*.

Yes, madam, *(with a grin)* it is not very early.

At all hours, I ſuppoſe, as it happens. Pray, child, can you tell me if there is among your ladies one Miſs Anſon?

Anſon—Anſon—I don't recollect ſuch a name, madam.

Do you know all their names?

I can't ſay I do:

Sir George Airy comes to her frequently—you know Sir George?

Sir

Sir George—yes, there's Sir George ſomething, that comes with Lord———

She was going on when Mrs. Fletcher called her in an angry tone; and ſo ſhe left me. I had drawn intelligence enough from her to convince me in what houſe I was ſituated. Juſt heaven! what were my reflections!

Not long after this converſation with the maid, the miſtreſs came to me: "Madam," ſaid ſhe, "I ſhall ſend you up a ſupper which I hope will prove agreeable to you: and when you would go to bed that is your chamber; I aſſure you the bed is well aired, and the maid ſhall warm it at whatever hour is moſt agreeable to you."

Mrs. Fletcher, you are miſtaken if you imagine I ſhall go to bed in a houſe ſo infamous as yours.

I underſtand you, madam:—but there are none of thoſe tricks play'd in my houſe I aſſure you—whatever is tranſacted here, is all fair and above board: you are very ſafe, believe me.

If you are ſo very fair and open, pleaſe to tell me on what account I am detained here?—by whoſe orders?

That I would with all my heart, but it is not in my power; all my buſineſs is to ſee that you are properly attended: I intermeddle no further.

With theſe words ſhe left me; the maid brought up ſupper, which conſiſted of ſeveral very nice things, with ſmall decanters of two or three ſorts of wine; I ordered her to take every thing down again, for I ſhould eat nothing: But ſhe ſaid her miſtreſs's orders were different, ſo ſhe left them.: In about half an hour I rung the bell, and then the girl ſeeing I had touched nothing carried the ſupper down again: ſhe aſked me at what time I would go to bed, and I anſwered her—not at all. I was all this while ſo exceedingly full of apprehenſions that I thought of nothing but ſecuring myſelf againſt the violence which I could not be in ſuch a houſe without having reaſon to dread. While the maid left the ſupper things, I examined the ſide board ſhe brought up, and ſeeing three or four pair of clean knives and forks, I ſecreted one of the latter, as the beſt weapon I could find: ſhe did not diſcover what I had done.

I ſaw no more that night of either the maid or her miſtreſs; I ſpent it without ſleep, but had no interruption. In the morning Mrs. Fletcher came in, and ſeeing by the bed that I had not been in it, ſhe ſaid,

Come, come, Miſs Watſon, let me perſuade you to vary your conduct—make a virtue of neceſſity, and be chearful—upon my word, it was worth while not to go to bed becauſe you was

in

in this houſe: to ſit up all night, for what pray? but will you come down and breakfaſt with us?

No.

Will you have it up here, then?

No.

Hey day! neither one nor t'other; here is a gentleman that deſigns himſelf the pleaſure of your company—I muſt——

Who—what gentleman? Mrs. Fletcher, I will ſee no gentlemen, at your peril——

Be not in a paſſion, child, the gentleman will do you no harm, I warrant.

She left me, and preſently after a young fellow of a profligate appearance entered. I was ſtruck through with terror; he accoſted me with ſeeming politeneſs, but I had not the power of utterance. Coming up to me and appearing as if he wanted to take me by the hand, I withdrew from him.

Miſs Watſon—I—I—madam, you'll be kind enough——

I know you not, Sir—nor will I have any thing to ſay to you.

Madam—not ſo unkind I hope—you—— *(advancing.)*

Leave me immediately. Are you the perſon by whoſe directions I was entrapped to this villainous houſe?

Indeed I am. My love for you, moſt angelic woman——

Begone, Sir: nor dare to ſtay with one who had rather die than be inſulted by ſuch wretches as you are.

Nay, my ſweet miſs, you muſt not threaten ſo much—ſuffer me to ſnatch a kiſs to make amends.

With this, he caught me in his arms, and endeavoured to kiſs me: I ſtruggled violently—but finding me weaker I ſuppoſe than he expected, he lifted me to the chamber door, kicked it open and was haſtening to the bed, when I made ſuch violent ſtruggles that I ſlipt on the floor, but finding nevertheleſs my ſtrength inſufficient to protect me, and not able to loſe my hand to get at the fork which I had otherwiſe buried in the villain's body, I had no reſource left but ſcreaming violently. In ſuch a houſe I had but little hopes of relief, but my fear urged me to it almoſt without reflection: I was miſtaken however: I preſently heard the ſteps of ſomebody, and in a minute who ſhould burſt into the room but Mr. Baining——

Ha! cried he—what do I ſee! Miſs Watſon! —ſtand off, villain.

The wretch ſtood aghaſt, but on Baining's crying out Draw!—and advancing with his ſword drawn, he drew, and fighting immediately, he was preſently wounded, and ſtaggered out of the room.

room. Mr. Baining then addreſſing himſelf to me:

Good heaven! madam, how came you in ſo ſhocking a ſituation, I am in aſtoniſhment—

Excuſe, Sir, my not thanking you for this critical aſſiſtance, in terms adequate to the ſervice you have done me; but I have been ſo terrified that I can ſcarce command a thought.

Say not a word of thanks, my dear madam—the aſſiſtance I have given you was ſuch as any man in the world, in the ſame ſituation, would have done. But I beg of you, explain to me the accidents which threw you into that ſcoundrel's hands.

For heaven's ſake, Sir, aſk me no queſtions here; get me but out of this curſed houſe, and I will tell you any thing.

That I will immediately, madam.

He walked with me to the dreſſing-room door, and going to open it, found it locked. Zounds! cried he, there is villainy in this, but I will down with the door:—ſaying this, he ſtampt furiouſly againſt it, to burſt it open, but in vain: and then raiſed a prodigious hallooing, ſwearing violently that he would cut their throats if the door was not opened immediately; but all in vain, neither his ſtrength nor his lungs had any effect—the door was too ſtrong-

ly faſtened for him; nor could he make any one hear him, or at leaſt, none choſe to hear him.

Madam, ſaid he, be not alarmed at this continuance of their plot; I will protect you, if there is a regiment of villains in conſpiracy againſt you: compoſe youſelf a little; and give me ſome idea of the cauſe of your being here; how came you into that fellow's hand, that tool of your old enemy, Sir Edward Manſel?

His tool! what, is he connected with Sir Edward? good heaven! can he plan this villainy!

No doubt of it, madam—at leaſt appearances are againſt him, for this fellow is a mere dependent upon him, and in a ſtile too groſs to mention.

What a wretch!—but are there no means, Sir, of eſcaping from this curſed houſe?

Pray heaven we may find ſome—but it muſt be confeſſed, at preſent, that we enjoy no great appearance of it: this houſe, one would think built for a very priſon.

We converſed a little on ſeveral different ſubjects, but chiefly on our ſituation, and we had nothing elſe to do 'till evening. My caſe was better than when in the power of that wretch, but I was yet very miſerable. My ſituation with Mr. Baining by no means pleaſed me: I could

could not forget the propoſals I had ſo lately had from him, and dreaded nothing ſo much as his renewing the ſubject, eſpecially as he could now additionally plead the ſervice he had done me: want of ſleep, added to the wretchedneſs of my reflections, gave me a violent head ache.

At night, a ſmall trap-door appeared ſuddenly in the ceiling, and a baſket was let down filled with a ſupper, and a bottle of wine: Mr. Baining immediately threatened them all with tenfold deſtruction, and in a moſt vociferous voice, if we were not directly relieved; but met with no anſwer. I am glad, however, ſaid he, turning to me, that we have got ſomething to eat and drink: I believe, madam, a little refreſhment is become abſolutely neceſſary to your health. He ſpread the things upon a table and perſuaded me to eat, which I did a little; and indeed it began to grow highly neceſſary to me. He exclaimed anew on the ſtrangeneſs of the adventure, but ſaid their plan was plainly to tire him out that they might attack me afreſh; which I thought probable enough. His preſence therefore was at the ſame time a protection and moſt diſtreſſing to me. At night he deſired me to retire to reſt, ſaying that I might lock myſelf into the bedchamber while he ſtayed in the dreſſing-room

to guard me. I was determined not to go to bed at all, but being very heavy I agreed to get ſome ſleep if I could by lying down in my clothes, while Mr. Baining was in the other room. And ſo the night paſſed. The next morning the trap-door opened as before and let our breakfaſt down. Then, for the firſt time, did he begin to renew his old addreſſes. I kept as long as I could from underſtanding him, but he grew ſo very plain that it was impoſſible to evade him.

Mr. Baining, before you proceed a ſyllable further, reflect a moment on my ſituation, and think if it is a proper one to hear any thing of this nature in—my thoughts are otherwiſe employed, I aſſure you.

This ſpeech, however, did not ſatisfy him, he continued the converſation in ſpite of my continued ſilence: I gave him no anſwer to his queſtions—he yet perſiſted, and in an hour or two grew ſo very free that I left him, and retiring to the bed-chamber ſhould have locked myſelf in but he prevented me.

Miſs Watſon, let me entreat you to promiſe me your hand, make me but your huſband, and you ſhall find, I will make your happineſs the buſineſs of my life.

Mr.

Mr. Baining, I have a proper ſenſe of the ſervice you have done me, but that cannot prevent me from telling you that this treatment is mean and contemptible—to be ſo perſecuting at ſuch a time as this! I abhorr it——

Madam, I fear you abhorr me, but by heavens I adore you—and longer to have your frowns to no purpoſe I cannot. Promiſe me—

I'll promiſe nothing——

My angel! *(Seizing my hand.)*

Away!—off, Mr. Baining.

This moment—this precious moment muſt be ſpent in love—your enemies may be now plotting to ſeparate us.

Would to heaven they may!—unhand me!—

My paſſion muſt plead my excuſe—*(catching me in his arms, and beginning to kiſs me.)*

Villain, leave me: let me go, *(ſtruggling violently)* wretch! begone this moment.

'Tis my love, miſs Watſon! my love alone can—*(throwing me on the bed.)*

Nothing could exceed the fury I was in at ſuch vile treatment: I ſcratched him in the face, and ſhould have claw'd his eyes out, but he confined my arms—I kicked, but he laid one of his legs on mine, and quite fixed me motionleſs: he was proceeding in his curſed deſign when

when my exceſſive ſhrieking brought ſomebody up, and the door opened.

Who ſhould enter but my miſtreſs, followed by Mrs. Fletcher, and two ill-looking women.

Hold, Mr. Jefferſon! cried Mrs. Strange, not ſo quick. Let her alone for the preſent.

Madam, *(letting me go)* this obſtinate cruel creature lends nought but a deaf ear to the tendereſt paſſion that ever warmed a human heart. I have made honourable propoſals to her, but in vain.

For heaven's ſake, madam, ſaid I, protect me from that villain, carry me from this infamous houſe, I have been baſely made a priſoner in it.

Come, come, Miſs Watſon,—you miſtake the matter greatly—I know the whole affair. Mr. Jefferſon is———

Mr. Jefferſon!———

Aye, Mr. Jefferſon—you will by and by know why he took the name of Baining. Mr. Jefferſon, I ſay, is a valuable man, of an exceeding good family, and ample fortune: this gentleman, Miſs Watſon, it is neceſſary you ſhould marry.

Marry! I'll be hang'd firſt. Marry the villain!

Take no ſuch imprudent reſolutions. They will

will be all vain. You muſt marry him immediately.

But pray who gave you authority to ſay ſo.

It matters not on what authority: Mr. Jefferſon, ſhall ſhe not marry you? will you let her depart one moment before ſhe marries you?

No indeed, madam, Miſs Watſon muſt now conſent to be mine; I wiſh heaven had been ſo propitious to me as to have brought it about without conſtraint—but as I am not ſo fortunate, I cannot conſent to be ſo thoroughly miſerable as I muſt without her.

Wretch! the law ſhall———

The law, my deareſt! you know no better, therefore you talk of law! Believe me, I will make you the beſt of huſbands.

Perdition ſhould ſeize my ſoul before I would have ſo deſpicable a fellow.

Your paſſion will be of no avail. Mrs. Fletcher, call in your worthy friend, the clergyman—— Miſs Watſon, make no reſiſtance, for mine you muſt be, and that directly.

I was infinitely terrified at this proceeding. The clergyman preſently entered the room with Mrs. Fletcher; and the company drew together around me as if they were in a great hurry to have the ceremony begun, the parſon advanced with the book in his hand, and Jefferſon took hold

hold of mine, but I ſnatched it from him and broke through the circle in a fury: that however did not ſave me, they preſently ſeized me again, and began the ſervice; but my ſtruggling and ſhrieking made it appear, even to themſelves, too much like a farce: I made no intreaties to any of them, well knowing that wretches who engage in ſuch affairs have no bowels to be moved with cries and prayers: I knew indeed that ſuch a marriage as this muſt, if the whole ſervice was gone through, be abſolutely null and void in law; but then I could not poſſibly tell how far thoſe preſent would forſwear themſelves, in proving the validity of it, and therefore determined to make all the oppoſition my ſtrength and voice would allow me.

As ſoon as they found how reſolute I was, they left off for a moment, but it was only to extend their helliſh deſigns. Mrs. Strange ſpoke to one of Mrs. Fletcher's ill-looking attendants; who directly left the room, returning in a few minutes with my dear little Lucy. I thought my heart would have broke at ſeeing her in ſuch hands. I ran to catch her in my arms, but they ſtopped me.

Hold, madam, ſaid Mrs. Strange, your child is not brought for you to fondle, but to be a witneſs of its death, if you will not marry Mr. Jefferſon.

I looked

I looked at her with a mixture of horror and contempt.

Which will you ſubmit to, continued ſhe, to have your child put to death before your face, or marry that gentleman?

To neither, vile woman: but you and your whole crew ſhall pay at the gallows for whatever your infamy prompts you to be guilty of.

Since you will have neither, you ſhall have both. Mrs. Fletcher, you and I and Mr. Jefferſon know each other well—I need ſay no more—but theſe two women of yours—can we depend—you underſtand me.

Never fear them, madam. But we had all better retire and leave them alone with the child.

Saying this, ſhe turned up the carpet and unlocking a trap door, laid it open, and pointing ſignificantly at it to the women: Good God! what a ſickneſs came over my very ſoul! Leaving the room, they began to drag me after them: all I could rave, rage, beg, and pray of them was in vain—they gave me not the leaſt ear, only anſwered, Marry him or your child dies within five minutes. I turned my eyes towards the ſweet little creature, and ſaw the two fiends had laid its neck quite bare, and were faſtning a cord about it to ſtrangle her. Heavens defend me! what a ſight was this! I doubted whether they would dare to injure the child, but feared

feared it moſt horribly; for the place and people appeared as hell to me. The ſeeing their proceedings, however, quite overpowered me; I cried out, "I'll marry him! I'll marry him this minute!"

I won't truſt you, replied Mrs. Strange, we ſhall have you ſtruggle and ſhriek again—No, no; we'll have no ſuch plague with you.

On my repeating again that I would marry him, and quietly too; they ordered the women to ſtop: but on the parſon's (a pretended one, I ſuppoſe) ſaying Wilt thou have this man? I replied, Proceed as you pleaſe, but I ſhall make no anſwers.

Away with her child, hallooed Mrs. Strange, the marriage ſhall not proceed till ſhe's dead.

I was confounded with terror and fear, and almoſt without perceivance: But ſo averſe was I to this diabolical pretended marriage, that I believe I ſhould again have ſpurned the very idea of compliance, had not my dear little Lucy kept looking at me moſt piteouſly with tears in her eyes, which made ſuch an impreſſion on me, that I ſuffered the ceremony to go on, on their promiſing to let me have her immediately, and no more to be taken from me, even for a moment.

When the infamous buſineſs was over, they conducted me (I had my child then) into the large room

room I was in when I firſt came. A table and ſide-board were ready for dinner, which in about half an hour was brought up, and I was fixed by my new huſband, as they called him, at the head of the table, and treated and complimented as a bride. I could not eat a morſel, and continued in the profoundeſt ſilence: but that did not prevent Mrs. Strange and Mrs. Fletcher from converſing with the utmoſt negligence on various ſubjects, with every now and then ſpeaking of my ſituation, and gloſſing it over very artfully. Jefferſon ſpoke but little, pretended much tenderneſs for me, and great concern at my having forced him to act in a manner ſo little agreeable to his nature. At laſt Mrs. Fletcher, (who I perceived had, when ſhe choſed to expreſs it, an exceeding quick underſtanding) on my ſaying, "that now their will was complied with, I ſuppoſed I was no longer to be locked up as a priſoner;" replied—

Mrs. Jefferſon, (that was the curſed appellation ſhe gave me) do not fear any thing happening to you that is diſagreeable in this houſe: you are now under the protection of your huſband: and if he deſires you to remain a day or two here to oblige him, I am ſure you will not refuſe his requeſt—your child ſhall be conſtantly with you.

Mr.

Mr. Jefferſon, I muſt inſiſt to know what it is I am to expect of you. Will you not carry me out of this houſe before night?

My deareſt, I cannot poſſibly do that, for I have no place ready for your reception—but—

No buts; give me your promiſe or I ſhall hate you for ever.

Any thing upon earth, my lovely bride, but ſuch a requeſt would meet with immediate compliance from me.

I perceived I had nothing to expect from him, but every thing to fear: the afternoon paſſed without any further explanation. Supper was brought up early, and I plainly ſaw from the general tenor of their manners that their plan was Jefferſon's paſſing the night with me, and all my thoughts were employed in parrying that blow. What to do I knew not: at night I was conducted to a new bedchamber; I took my little Lucy with me, for I found if I refuſed to go up, I ſhould be carried by force. I ſat down in a chair, and a maid coming in about half an hour to ſee if I was in bed, returned, and preſently after in came Jefferſon—

Come, my deareſt, you will go to bed?

No; I ſhall not go to bed.

Prithee, my dear Lucy, do not be ſo abſurd—come, child—come, *(hanging up his ſword and beginning to undreſs himſelf.)*

Stand

Stand off. I poſitively will not.

By degrees, he proceeded to be very free with my clothes as if about to undreſs me, but I made ſo good a uſe of the little ſtrength I was miſtreſs of that he ſeemed highly diſpleaſed at the reception he met with; and being ſomewhat irritated, he proceeded to actual violence, when having one arm at liberty, I ſlipped my hand in my pocket and graſping the fork, I had infallibly buried it in his ſide, but he ſtarted from me in a horrible fright.

Villain, cried I, be gone; nor dare to ſtand the reproach of an eye like mine, which ought to look you into ſtone. Think of the wickedneſs of your conduct towards me and repent in time. But act as you may, I ſwear by all that's juſt, I'll plunge this fork into your curſed heart if you dare touch me more.

I had ſcarce finiſhed this word when Mrs. Strange and Mrs. Fletcher entered the room. I caught up my child under one arm, and flying to Jefferſon's ſword which hung juſt by me, I ſeized and drew it from the ſcabbard; then placing myſelf in a corner of the room, I remained ſilent, determining to die rather than ſuffer further violence, or part from my child. I believe a peculiar ſpirit animated this action of mine, for they all looked aghaſt at me; and preſently left the room. The maid came up

again

again in about half an hour, to aſſure me from Mr. Jefferſon, I might retire to reſt, and ſhould not be diſturbed by any body. But I was not fool enough to believe his meſſage; I felt myſelf exceſſively ſleepy, and to keep myſelf awake I deſired her to bring me ſome paper and a pen and ink, which ſhe accordingly did, and the uſe I made of them was to ſcribble this relation of my ſufferings to you, my dear friend—and this without knowing how or when I ſhall be able to ſend it.

* * *

I ſhall proceed, my dear Kitty, with my narrative, from the time when I left off, to the preſent.

The next day after my writing I determined to try what I could do with the maid: I concealed the ſword under my petticoats, and when ſhe came to me in the morning I complained of being melancholy, and aſked her if ſhe could not let me breakfaſt with ſome of the other ladies, for I wanted ſome converſation to enliven me. She replied, ſhe muſt aſk her miſtreſs, for without her leave ſhe dared not. I aſked her if Mr. Jefferſon or Mrs. Strange were with her miſtreſs; ſhe replied, "No, they were gone out." I then deſired ſhe would aſk her miſtreſs; adding,

Cannot

Cannot you let me follow you out?—juſt down ſtairs?

Oh! no:——

Here, child, if you will let me down into the hall I will give you a guinea.

You need not offer me any money, for if you was to give me twenty I could not—and if you was down in the hall you could not get out, for the porter is conſtantly at the door.

Here are two guineas if you will let me down and go to your miſtreſs, and keep her employed while I get the porter to let me out.

No, no, no; that will never do—if I could ſerve you, miſs, I would, but I can't——

You really can't.

No.

I immediately took my child under my arm, whipt out the ſword, and making as if I would run at her—ſhe ſhrieked out—"If you give the leaſt ſquawl I will kill you this inſtant." She dropt on her knees—"Lord have mercy upon me, madam! for God's ſake don't hurt me!" I told her if ſhe did not immediately conduct me down ſtairs I would run her through: and taking hold of her clothes behind made her walk out. I followed her in that manner, holding the ſword in a menacing attitude. "If you open your lips, I will run it into your body!"

She

She walked trembling out of the room—and through two paſſages, then unlocked a door, croſſed two rooms; then unlocked another door, and went through another paſſage: "Now, ſaid ſhe in a whiſper, we go by my miſtreſs's room with the door wide open, ſhe muſt ſee us." —I replied, "Hold your tongue and go on." I was in luck, I ſuppoſe, for the door was open, but we neither heard nor ſaw any one. We then deſcended the ſtairs; every thing favoured me; the maid had got almoſt to the porter and I at her back without his ſeeing me: when I was in the hall, I puſhed her from before me, and in as furious an accent as I could command—

Open the door this moment——

The fellow in ſurprize ſtood ſtill and ſaid nothing—nor did he offer to open it: upon which, I ran at him with the ſword, and I believe wounded his arm: he ſwore a volley of oaths in an inſtant, but not opening the door;

Oh! you won't open it! then die, villain!—Running at him again—but he eſcaped the ſtroke by leaving the door, and the room in a minute—I flew to the door, and drawing back the bolt and taking down the chain, was juſt ſtepping out, when who ſhould lay their hands on me but Mrs. Fletcher; ſhe was within a hair's breadth of pulling me backwards unto the ground, but turning about I brandiſhed my

ſword

ſword at her with ſuch a look that I put her to flight in a moment: the hall was by this time full, but I turned my back on them all; and ran along the ſtreet as faſt as I could to the amazement of all that ſaw me: I looked back once or twice, and was horribly frightened on ſeeing the porter following me at a little diſtance: I ſlipt the ſword under my petticoats, and turned through two or three ſtreets, but knew not what to do; ſuch terror was I in at the vile porter, who was juſt behind me; ſo near that I took out the ſword again, expecting him to ſeize me. At laſt I turned into a ſtreet greatly crouded with people and carriages, and croſſing it, had the joy of ſeeing a machine juſt before me ſtanding at an inn door, but that inſtant going off. I call'd to the coach-man to take me in: he came down from the box, and opening the door, I was juſt going in when the porter cried out,

Halloo! you Sir! coachman, don't take that damn'd thief in—ſhe has juſt robb'd her miſtreſs's houſe of valuables, and carries a ſword to defend herſelf from juſtice.

All was immediately at a pauſe: a mob gathered about us: I addreſſed myſelf to three gentlemen in the coach:

For heaven's ſake, gentlemen, do not let this villain traduce me thus—I am this moment

eſcaped from his miſtreſs, a ſhocking woman, who has kept me a priſoner ſome days, and treated me cruelly: and ſeized this weapon to defend myſelf with.

By G— ſhe's a thief, ſhe has ſtole things from my miſtreſs: and damn you, coachman, carry her away at your peril.

I then, with as much coolneſs as I was miſtreſs of, aſked the fellow what I had ſtole; and offered to be ſearched by any one, and his heſitating anſwers worked in my favour with all preſent. One of the gentlemen, a young officer, ſwore I ſhould come in, for that my accuſer was a villain: another of them talked of having him taken up, the third mentioning a conſtable, the raſcal ſneaked off; and the coachmon muttering—"damn'd odd," mounted his box and began his journey.

The gentlemen preſently entered into converſation with me by enquiring into the adventure from which I had juſt eſcaped: of which I told them ſome particulars: they expreſſed great ſatisfaction at my luckily getting from ſo vile a confinement, and the young officer made ſo many compliments that I wiſhed myſelf in another coach, almoſt as ſoon as I had entered this. I aſked what machine it was? The Saliſbury, replied they. It then came into my head to look if the name was not fixed to the outſide

outſide of the vehicle; and looking out of the window, found that it was: this circumſtance filled me with fears; I concluded that the villainous porter did not overlook it, and I made no doubt but he would report it at home, from whence I ſhould be immediately purſued: and the ſight of the devil was not more horrible to me in imagination than that of my pretended huſband.

Theſe melancholy reflections occupied my mind ſo much that I attended very little to the converſation of my fellow travellers: I was nearly ſilent till the machine ſtopped to change horſes. At this place, on the oppoſite ſide of the way, I took notice of another machine marked Exeter: it immediately occurred to me, that if I could change, I ſhould not only elude purſuit, but get rid of company which grew diſagreeable to me. This thought had ſcarce ſtruck me but I immediately executed it—I left the coach, paid the coachman, and walked on through the town aſking which way the Exeter machine went. I did not immediately take a place in it, that nobody about that I had left ſhould by any means be able to trace me. I had got but a little way out of town when the machine I wanted paſſed; I ſtopped and entered it, and to my no ſmall pleaſure, found only two old women in it. All

circumſtances became exceeding lucky, I travelled on the whole day, laid upon the road, and the next day by dinner arrived at Exeter. I was ſo very fearful of being diſcovered that I did not ſtay two minutes at the inn but walked directly into the city, and having ſtrayed into an obſcure part of it, walked into a grocer's ſhop, bought a pound of jarr raiſins, and aſked a woman I took for the miſtreſs, if ſhe could recommend me to a lodging—"Let me ſee, my dear," to her huſband: "Surely Mrs. Wildman could accommodate her." Her huſband ordered his ſhop-boy to ſtep there, and he preſently came back, ſaying that her rooms were empty: the boy was ſent again to ſhow me the way, and in a few minutes I arrived at her houſe, which was ſmall, but neat and clean. I aſked her to ſhow me a bedchamber, which ſhe did immediately, and the bargain was ſtruck at five ſhillings a week: I had no ſpirit to beat her down to a reaſonable price. I took poſſeſſion by flinging myſelf on the bed, with my dear little Lucy in my arms, and we were both preſently aſleep, the little I had got in the machine had ſo poorly refreſhed me that I ſtood in infinite want of it: I waked after a ſleep of above four hours, and then agreed with the woman to board me and my child at ten ſhillings a week.

This

This morning I roſe much refreſhed from a good night's reſt, and having breakfaſted, immediately ſat down and wrote you the above. What to do, my deareſt, I know not—but ſhall determine to wait, without taking any abſolute reſolution, 'till I hear from you—give me your advice, for I have been ſo worried of late that I can reflect ſteadily on nothing but my miſerable ſituation. I ſhall not write yet to ~~my friend~~ the good Mr. Thomas, for I am afraid of being diſcovered where there may even be no danger. Direct to me at Mrs. Wildman's, in Brook lane, Exeter. Adieu.

L. WATSON.

LETTER XXV.

Sir EDWARD MANSEL to FRANCIS MONSON Eſq.

MY dear Frank, I am in the greateſt confuſion imaginable: I believe the world is all conſpired to plague me. I wiſh you could call upon me ſome time this week, that I might have your advice how to act: but leſt you ſhould not be able to come, I will ſketch to you the ſituation of my affairs.

In the firſt place, I went down to Eppingſwell, determined if poſſible to make up matters with Lucy, for as to Lady Mary I gave her up; ſhe put upon my paſſion for her beyond endurance. I went accordingly to parſon Thomas's, but the impertinent fool truly would not ſuffer me to ſee her: I ſwore, and ſtorm'd, and rav'd at him, but all in vain; the dog viewed me with the moſt cynical ſilence; and I was forced to leave the place without ſeeing her. However I ordered Jefferſon to deſiſt from courting her, and being not a little mortified at the receptions I met with from Lady Mary, I made the dog ſwear that he would cut the throat of that puppy the Count: this buſineſs, however, was prevented by the raſcal's being blown up and abſconding. I ſoon after called at her Ladyſhip's, but was much ſurprized to find ſhe was gone into the country with a Mr. Benſon, a relation of hers, as they told me: though I never heard of this relation before, nor could I get any intelligence where ſhe was gone. What confounded affairs theſe are, Frank! hang 'em—they ought not to give me a day's uneaſineſs—but yet they make me peeviſh. In what a plague conſiſts the good of ſuch an eſtate as I poſſeſs, if every trifle proves too much for me; what arrant nothings are theſe! and yet all my riches do not keep them from tormenting me! In this

ſtate

ſtate of mind, I walked for a game or two to Slaughter's; I aſked a gentleman that ſeated himſelf near me, if he play'd, and anſwering, Yes, we began. Among ſome remarks which he made on the game, he ſaid a friend of his play'd incomparably; that his preſent abſence from town was a great loſs to him; "However, added he, he is employed on a good buſineſs at preſent, ſo I do not ſo much regret it: he is by this in poſſeſſion of one of the fineſt women in England." This part of his diſcourſe made me attentive to him.

What! did cheſs, Sir, introduce him to her?

Why, no, Sir: though ſhe plays tolerably.

Pray, Sir, will it be impertinent to aſk her name?

Oh! not at all, Sir, though I don't mean to make common town-talk of it. 'Tis Lady Mary Sion.

Lady Mary Sion! is ſhe really gone off with your friend?

She is, Sir. Believe me, Sir, he is worthy of her, he is an excellent cheſs player, and a very worthy fellow.

Are you certain of this, Sir?

Certain! why, is there any thing ſo ſurprizing in it? 'Tis true he rivalled one Sir Edward ſomething, I forget his name, with a very great eſtate; but money, Sir, was nothing to

her: and you muſt know, they ſay ſhe made quite a fool of him, and not only jilted him herſelf, but employed a young fellow to gain the love of a miſtreſs he kept—down in Eſſex, I forget her name too.

And do you know whether ſhe ſucceeded in that ſcheme?

Why, they ſay to admiration; the poor baronight was fairly jilted by both: and is at preſent without either miſtreſs or wife. Ha! ha!

And pray, Sir, what may be the name of this friend of yours?

Benſon is his name, Sir.

But poſſibly, Sir, this may all be fiction; ſuch tales as theſe ſpread quickly, without being fact.

That it is truth, I very well know; but the world may like enough be made to believe, by and by, that there is fiction in ſome of it. Her ladyſhip, in caſe they don't continue on perfect terms together, may declare the whole to be romance, and ſo gull Sir Edward again, and that ſhe moſt undoubtedly will, if this affair with my friend breaks off.

This is extraordinary, I muſt confeſs: that ſame Sir Edward is well treated among them. But pray, Sir, by what means was this Eſſex miſtreſs brought to be faithleſs to him?

Why,

Why, really, Sir, I know nothing clearly in that affair: one Thomas, a clergyman, was mentioned as concerned in managing a part of it: a lye was trumped up to deceive the baronight, while the youth and his miſtreſs enjoyed their love—for as I underſtand the matter, the plan concerted was for the miſtreſs to continue if poſſible her influence over Sir Edward, and even draw him to marry her, and then with his wealth reward the man ſhe loved. Don't you think, Sir, that this ſame Knight is well gulled among them?

Gulled indeed! I had heard enough—this fellow's information, though chance brought it me, is beyond all doubt true. Benſon! the very name I heard at Lady Mary's houſe—the circumſtances of my being ſo deceived about Lucy—Thomas's villainy—all conſpires to prove that this random intelligence is to be depended upon. I do not doubt but I ſhall preſently hear every ſyllable of it confirmed. What a confounded fool have I been to be ſo transformed into an idiot by two deviliſh women! Pray heaven I may be able to forget them both—— they deſerve not another thought—But, that Lucy ſhould uſe me ſo! I could not have thought it.——I am almoſt inclined to forſwear women: by heavens, a good cheſs player is worth the

whole ſex. Farewel, my friend, let me be ſpeedily refreſhed with the reviving preſence of one who I know is ſincere.

E. MANSEL.

LETTER XXVI.

Miſs CHARLTON to Miſs WATSON.

London.

WE have been at this place a fortnight, and your letter was ſent me from the country. Gracious God, my dear Lucy, what a ſituation you have been in! Heaven defend you from any future perils of ſo alarming a nature: thank God you eſcaped from the wretches in a manner worthy of yourſelf; and have been ſo cautious in your flight that I think they can never purſue you; ſo far you are ſafe, and as to ſuch a villainous pretence of marriage it can be nothing at all—not binding for a moment. I incloſe you a trifle, my deareſt, but ſhall take it extremely ill if you ſay a ſyllable about it. I wiſh with all my heart you had ſtayed at the good Thomas's, you would not then have been liable to ſuch an affair: but what to adviſe you

now

now I know not; if that vile crew could not gain their will on you by perjury, I ſhould be inclined to return to Mr. Thomas's if he aſked it, firſt writing him of your adventure and preſent ſituation; but if Jefferſon ſhould there find you out, as he certainly would, and be able to prove the marriage good, your worthy friend might not be able to protect you, nor ſhould you forget that there is nothing villainous uncharacteriſtical with ſuch a fellow; you may expect every thing from ſuch a wretch. Surely, my Lucy, you had better write Mr. Thomas, deſiring him to be ſecret, and ſtating the whole affair to him, aſk his opinion of the marriage. Another thing I muſt remind you of, you made ſo good a uſe of your ſword, that you ſhould never ſtir without it under your petticoat: and if I were you I would buy a brace or two of piſtols, and have them conſtantly loaded, which would be a great ſecurity againſt ſuch a parcel of cowards as I dare ſay they all are: If you obſerve, you will find that exceſſive fear is generally one trait in ſuch characters.

My affair with Mr. Cary is exactly in the ſame ſtate as when I wrote to you laſt. I have determined to keep, for ſome time at leaſt, from any clandeſtine marriage, and if I poſſibly can to divulge it to my father, and gain his conſent,

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which would make me happier than I can expreſs. When Mr. Cary underſtood that we were going to London, he left his friends and took the ſame journey firſt. Soon after our arrival he called to welcome us to town, and by the reception my father and mother gave him, I believe they do not ſuſpect any thing between us. But what provokes me more than I can expreſs, is that creature Hinchley's not yet giving over his deſigns on me: you muſt know, my dear Lucy, the animal is come to exhibit his character for the firſt time in London, and by his timing the journey ſo exactly with us, I queſtion not but he intends to renew his odious addreſſes to me.

* * *

I have found, my deareſt Lucy, ſuch inconveniencies in Mr. Cary's coming frequently, (ſuch as I did not expect) that, I at laſt determined to break the affair to my father. I accordingly wrote a ſhort letter to him, expreſſing my wiſhes that he would permit Mr. Cary to explain himſelf. I left the letter in his apartment, and on his finding and reading it, he called me to him. He had nothing in his countenance that made me tremble in the manner I expected; Sit down, ſaid he.

My deareſt Kitty, I am extremely glad you let me know your inclinations—inſtead of acting

in

in any manner without my knowledge. You muſt be ſenſible that any thing of this nature requires mature conſideration, and I am ſure you have too much ſenſe to think of acting precipitately in it: I will take the firſt opportunity of making myſelf perfectly acquainted with Mr. Cary's character, his family and fortune: If I find he is a proper match, I will with the utmoſt readineſs conſent to your receiving his addreſſes. I could have wiſhed Mr. Hinchley had been agreeable to you—he is a worthy man, and has a very fine eſtate; but if you promiſe me, my dear, never to act in this affair with Mr. Cary without my conſent, I will now promiſe you ſhall hear no more of Mr. Hinchley.

My father was milder and more reaſonable with me by far than I expected: I promiſed him with the utmoſt readineſs what he deſired: I could not poſſibly do leſs. But I obſerve, that Mr. Cary has not been let in ſince: this circumſtance makes me uneaſy; however, I am determined to wait patiently the event of my father's enquiries concerning him: for I know his real character too well to believe that any thing unworthy can be diſcovered in him: I hope my father may ſoon give me the ſatisfaction I wiſh for. Before I conclude this ſcrawl, I muſt again repeat, my dear Lucy, that you

would write Mr. Thomas an account of your affair, and aſk his advice, but charge him at the ſame time to ſecrecy.

Adieu, my deareſt.

C. CHARLTON.

LETTER XXVII.

Captain JEFFERSON to Mr. CARY.

HAD I time to write you a long letter, I could fill it with adventures, but two words muſt ſuffice. Who ſhould appear at Eppingſwell but Lady Mary Sion in diſguiſe, come down to marr a marriage which ſhe expected between Sir Edward and Miſs Watſon: I immediately made known to her my deſigns, which concurred ſo exactly with her's; I informed her that ſhe was near leaving Mr. Thomas's to go to ſervice, and it immediately ſtruck her ladyſhip to hire a houſe ſomewhere in the country, and try to get her for a maid. The thought no ſooner occurred than it was executed: ſhe took the name of Mrs. Strange, and we managed ſo well that it was impoſſible ſhe ſhould eſcape the trap—ſhe was caught—we carried her

to

to Mrs. Thompſon's rooms, and after much plague I married her by force—but as the devil would have it, when I was on the point of reaping the harveſt of my labours, ſhe ſnatched up my ſword, and I was within an ace of being run through the guts, and ſhe diſplayed ſuch a ſpirit that Lady Mary adviſed my leaving her to Mrs. Thompſon's management a day or two, which I conſented to; but when I returned, behold ſhe was gone—made her way ſword in hand through every thing, and got into the Saliſbury machine. Was there ever ſo unlucky a dog! This is but the very outline of the affair, when I ſee you, you ſhall have the whole: I am ready to hang myſelf with very venom—— Lady Mary ſtorms—as to her proſecuting us, we fear it not, having a command of ten oaths to her one; beſides ſhe is poor as a rat, but the loſing her ſo is moſt confounded bungling. My love is moſt curſedly diſappointed, and I ſhall have my plans of revenge fail me too, if I am not expeditiouſly active; but as my ſchemes will ſoon come to Sir Edward's knowledge, I ſhall execute them directly. I have already ſet Dick Richardſon to way-lay him at Slaughter's Coffee-houſe, and fill him with jealouſy of both Lady Mary and Miſs Watſon; that the former is run away with Mr. Benſon; and that he might fully credit it I bribed one of her ſervants to tell him

if

if he called there, that ſhe was gone into the country with *her couſin* Benſon: theſe ſtrokes will make him jealous, and ſo far miſerable—every pang he feels is a joy to me; then I will draw him unſuſpectingly to Gerard's, under pretence of carrying him to an admirable cheſs-player who is too lame to wait on him; there ſhall be Harry, Davie, Jones, and Raker, beſides Gerrard and myſelf, we ſhall all agree in our tale, and depend upon it, he dies under the villainy of having attempted to run me through: I have laid the plan ſo that it is impoſſible he ſhould eſcape or we be diſcovered. But before the wretch is ſent to his brethren below, I will tell him 'tis my revenge, that Miſs Watſon dies almoſt for love of him; that all he has been made to believe is deceit, and fill his ſoul with the crueleſt pangs before he feels the ſtroke that wipes them out. When this buſineſs is clearly diſpatched, then for love; then will I diſcover my fair fugitive! Revenge! Revenge! ſhall be my motto to the laſt! I have deceived Lady Mary, and I believe ſhall manage ſo as to marry her to Jones. Adieu, yours, &c.

H. JEFFERSON.

LETTER XXIX.

Miſs CHARLTON to Mrs. WILDMAN.

I Trouble you with this on account of a young lady, Miſs Watſon, who lodged ſome time ago at your houſe: I wrote to her ſoon after ſhe came to you, but having received no anſwer am fearful ſomething has happened to her, or that ſhe has left you; if my ſuſpicions are true, be ſo good as to let me know whatever particulars you are acquainted with.

I am your humble ſervant,

At Francis Charlton's Eſq. CATH. CHARLTON.
at Ripſwell, near Hertford.

LETTER XXX.

ANSWER.

MADAM,

I Received your ladyſhip's commands, and ſhall acquaint you directly with what I know concerning the lady you mentioned: nothing particular happened to her at my houſe, except

a ſad fit of ſickneſs. Poor Lady, ſhe was taken ill not long after ſhe came, and I was ſurprized that ſhe would not take my advice more. I would have had her ſend for Dr. Gummy, but ſhe would not be perſuaded 'till ſhe was quite bad, and when the doctor came he thought her in a bad way, and gave her ſome phyſic: but ſhe continued very bad nevertheleſs. I cannot help telling you, madam, that I pitied and was very ſorry for the poor lady, for ſhe was as good a one as ever I heard of. I have had a great many lodgers, but never any that behaved half ſo prettily, and to be ſure ſhe had the prettieſt child I ever ſaw, and was ſurpriſingly fond of it—but I really pitied her very much, for the doctor had not been with her above twice, when I found the lady, though ſhe did not ſay it, had no more money to ſpare for him, ſo ſhe only had Mr. Bill the potecary: and I was ſadly vexed to find that ſhe could not afford to have him ſo long as was neceſſary: but, madam, I did for her all that was poſſible, though I had no hopes to be paid, but the lady's goodneſs made me; for ſhe, to be ſure, would have had money, and to ſpare, but ſhe, only a week before, paid ſix pounds three and ſixpence to ſave a poor man from going to jail, who had a wife and four fine children: 'twas a charitable deed,

and

and I could not let the lady want for it: for ſhe would not accept of any thing from me, but I was forced to pay for ſeveral things without letting her know of it; and pleaſe your ladyſhip I ſend a bill of them, for to be ſure you are her relation, and of courſe will pay it me, the amount thirteen pounds ten ſhillings; I have not charged any thing like all.

However, madam, God pleaſed that the lady's illneſs ſhould not be the death of her, for by ſlow degrees ſhe got pretty well; and ſhe left my houſe as ſoon as ſhe was able, I ſuppoſe to go to her friends; and theſe, pleaſe your ladyſhip, are all the particulars I know concerning her. I am, Madam,

Yours dutifully,

E. WILDMAN.

LETTER XXXI.

Miſs WATSON to Miſs CHARLTON.

I Am afraid my dear Kitty has thought me backward in writing to her; but I purpoſely delayed it until I could give you a more ſatisfactory account of myſelf than has been for ſome

ſome time paſt in my power: indeed I have been diſpoſed of lately in ſo uncertain a manner, that I could have ſent you ſcarce any thing but ſcraps: however, having at preſent a little more time, I ſhall employ it in giving you an account of my adventures, if I may uſe that term for them.

Before I left Mrs. Wildman's, (which I did in conſequence of the perpetual horrors I was under at the idea of being diſcovered) I was attacked with a bad fit of ſickneſs, which obliged me to have recourſe to ſome phyſical people, and every new face I ſaw made me in ſome degree uneaſy, leſt by any unforeſeen accidents my enemies ſhould find me; and this was my chief inducement for leaving my lodgings. I took the road to Tiverton, and from thence went to Barnſtaple, where I thought I ſhould be ſufficiently concealed even if I was traced to Exeter. I fixed myſelf in a cheap lodging, and made it my firſt buſineſs to find ſome work if I could of a milliner or mantuamaker. I ſucceeded tolerably, and earned near enough for the maintainance of myſelf and my dear little Lucy.

As I was one day carrying home ſome work to my employer, a Mrs. Temple; a man met me in the ſtreet who ſeemed to take uncommon notice

notice of me: his looking ſo earneſt at me filled me with terror leſt he ſhould be in the league againſt me: I hurried on, and was yet more frightned when I ſaw him enter the ſhop ſoon after, though he was going the contrary way when I met him. He aſked to ſee ſome mini-onet lace, but continued looking at me in a manner by no means pleaſing to one ſo full of ſuſpicions as I was: I did not recollect having ever ſeen him before; he appeared about thirty years of age, and looked ſomething like a country ſquire, of the ſmarter order. I left the ſhop as faſt as I could. The next time I went to Mrs. Temple's, ſhe aſked me to ſtay tea with her, which invitation I readily accepted; but had not been there above a quarter of an hour before this gentleman entered the room: a circumſtance by no means agreeable to me; and his enſuing conduct made me heartily repent the ſtaying; he was ſo particularly attentive and polite that I could not but underſtand his deſign was to make himſelf agreeable to me; and very far was it from giving me the leaſt pleaſure. I ſhortened my viſit, went home ſooner than I had deſigned, and was not a little mortified at Mr. Greaves (for that was the unknown gentleman's name) inſiſting on attending me home: my excuſes were uſeleſs, for he would do it,

and

and when he took his leave of me, he ſaid, "Nothing can make me half ſo happy as the pleaſure of meeting you again, madam,"—and pauſing—"may I preſume to aſk leave to wait on you?"—but I anſwered him in a peremptory tone—"By no means, Sir—I ſee nobody whatever."

And for the future, I was very cautious never to let Mrs. Temple know when I ſhould be at her houſe; but went at times when I thought I ſhould be little expected: I tryed if I could get work any where elſe, but could meet with none.

All my care was however in vain: I was taking her directions for a cap one day in her parlour when in came Mr. Greaves,—"Oh; Mr. Greaves!—I find now the motive of your coming here—come, Sir, pray don't intrude upon Mrs. Soams (I had taken that name) ſhe is here on buſineſs now."

"Madam, ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to me, I have long wiſhed for ſuch an opportunity as this. I have ſome reaſon to think that you are not in every reſpect ſituated in a proper manner: let me beg of you to accept an apartment in my aunt's houſe, who lives within a mile and a half of this place; ſhe is a valuable woman, and you may depend upon living entirely as is agreeable to you." I refuſed his offer abruptly, and left the houſe directly, and returned home. The next

next day he called on me, and being in a little meadow behind the houſe he accoſted me in a mighty tender manner, and forced me to hear part of his mind, which was a declaration of love in very plain terms. This was an unlucky adventure to me: for I was very tolerably off in work, and might have continued ſo, had it not been for this man; but ſo little was I diſpoſed for any ſuch affair, that I determined to leave the town immediately: I accordingly paid for my lodgings and ſet off for Biddeford, where I hoped to enjoy better luck. It was with ſome difficulty that I found a lodging to ſuit me, and yet greater to meet with employment, for I was ſo long without work that I found myſelf under an indiſpenſible neceſſity of running ſomewhat into my landlady's debt; and in this matter I found her tolerably humane: the moment I procured work I kept myſelf perpetually buſy, that I might be able to be at leaſt clear in the world, and I believe I ſhould have effected it had not an unfortunate illneſs befell my dear little girl, the expence of which was paſt my ability to bear, and eſpecially while I was continually watching, and felt my own health again on the decline: this ſituation would not allow me to keep free from debts, greatly as I feared their conſequences: however my landlady was very kind

kind to me, and did not ſeem to regret the truſting me. My poor Lucy recovered her diſorder but ſlowly, and I ſcarce enjoyed the proſpect of ſeeing her well again, before a freſh miſery befel me.

I was ſitting in a little ſpare room below ſtairs, my landlady, Mrs. Steel, juſt left me, and who ſhould enter it but Mr. Greaves! I was ſtruck with terror at the ſight. I fled from Barnſtaple meerly to free myſelf from him, and to meet him again filled me with apprehenſions.

So, madam, ſaid he, you took a haſty leave of Barnſtaple, but I could not give up the thoughts of your ſituation ſo eaſily. Do not miſtake me, madam, I have followed you through an earneſt deſire of being of ſervice to you: I am certain you are in want of friends: let me beg of you to accept in me a moſt diſintereſted one.

Sir, you muſt allow me in one word to tell you, that I want no other friends than thoſe I have already; that if I did want any, you, from your late conduct, ſhould be one of the laſt I would take. This is my determination, give yourſelf no further trouble about me; for another word will I never exchange with one who follows me in ſo mean a manner.

Saying

Saying this I left the room, and kept ſo cloſe to my chamber that I could not meet with him again. But Mrs. Steel took an opportunity of telling me that he had called once or twice to ſpeak with me, and that he was now in the houſe for the ſame purpoſe.

He may go as ſoon as he pleaſes, for I ſhall neither ſee nor ſpeak with him.

Well for my part, I don't know what ſome people would be at: here you are deep in my debt, and as to paying, where that's to come from I can't ſee—and if you could make a friend to aſſiſt you, and refuſe it, 'tis quite obſtinate.

This was a ſudden change in her manner that quite alarmed me.

Mrs. Steel, leave that to me: as to your money it is ſafe: I will work my fingers to the bone but I will be out of your debt, and that ſpeedily too.

Aye, aye; fine talking, inſtead of money; but that won't do for me: there is no neceſſity for my truſting one that will not make a friend when ſhe might. So look ye, I muſt have my money—I will truſt you no longer.

You know I cannot pay you at preſent, why therefore do you aſk me for the money—but have a little patience with me, and———

No reaſon for patience at all—if I had the

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No reaſon for patience at all—if I had the

patience of Job it would not be enough: I will have my money; if you was a reaſonable body, and would take a gentleman's offer of being a friend when 'twas in your power, well and good, I might have patience—but to live ſuch a vagabond life, ſneaking about from town to town—I like no ſuch lodgers—and ſo, d'ye ſee, my money I will have.

You can have no money of me at preſent. What is your demand?

Three and thirty ſhillings, every farthing. But Mr. Greaves waits—will you ſee him?

No, poſitively won't I.

Then you ſhall this minute either pay me or go to jail—or if you don't chuſe that, you may go naked into the ſtreet—for all the clothes on you and your child are not worth more.

She run on in a moſt furious manner, and would hear ſo little of what aſſurances I had to make her, that I was at laſt forced to go down to Mr. Greaves.

I find, Sir, by Mrs. Steel, that you are the perſon to whom I am obliged for her inhuman treatment of me.

To me, madam!—Mrs. Steel inhuman; I will ſee her this minute; ſhe dared not ſurely to———

He called her, and ſhe entering———

How

How dare you, Mrs. Steel, uſe a ſtranger in the manner you have done this lady—ſhe ſays you have treated her inhumanly.

Yes, to be ſure—'tis very inhuman to aſk for one's money—I can't ſay but I did tell her ſhe ſhould go to jail, or naked into the ſtreet if I was not paid immediately—but what of that; my money is my right.

He aſked her the ſum, and paid it immediately.

Mr. Greaves, your acting over this farce with Mrs. Steel will not blind me—your paying her is nothing to me, I ſhall reſtore the money equally the ſame as if I had never ſeen you.

Mrs. Steel leaving the room with her money, he turning to me, replied,

Do not be ſo very backward, madam, to accept the offerings of mere humanity; believe me, I ſhould act preciſely the ſame if you were as ugly as a witch—but you handſome ladies are always ſo ready to attribute every thing to your beauty—Let me perſuade you, madam, to accept of this trifle *(taking a bank-note of twenty pounds out of his pocket)* and if I can be of ſervice to you in any other manner whatever, believe me, I ſhould eſteem an opportunity as my greateſt happineſs.

I thanked him for his offer, but abſolutely refuſed it: he then called Mrs. Steel, and giv-

ing her the note, ordered her to ſupply me with every thing I ſhould want—then turning to me, I find, madam, you ſuſpect all my motives, but I aſſure you ſincerely I have none but mere friendſhip, and hope at another time you will be more ready to believe me.

He then took his leave of me, and Mrs. Steel returned to more than her former civility. I had determined to leave her the moment I could diſcharge my debt, and took particular care not to increaſe it, as I found myſelf able to work, and was determined to ſuffer no part of the bank note to be expended upon me. But before I could pay my reckoning, I found her more than common propenſity to tattling had ſpread my adventure among the neighbours, and many pretended errands were made for an opportunity of tittle tattle.

In about a week after, Mrs. Steel came up to me in a great hurry to let me know a lady in a coach wanted to ſpeak with me. Much ſurprized at hearing it, I went down and found a little lively old woman alighted from her chariot and already in the parlour. She accoſted me with great familiarity.

So child—what!—you are the young woman with a little girl that they talk about ſo much. Some misfortune has happened to you, I ſuppoſe; and ſo no body knows you, I hear; well—

no

no matter for that—let me hear your account of yourſelf: I never like to mind one ſtory 'till I hear another. And ſo they ſay Mr. Greaves has been after you: don't liſten to him yet—never be too much in a hurry; but let me hear, and ſo you have no relations near here—ha, child———

I give you this ſpecimen of her manner, my dear, for ſuch a clack never did I hear: ſhe run on queſtioning me without giving me time to put in a monoſyllable for an anſwer. On ſhe ran.

And ſo you have a little girl—let me ſee it: a fine child, I ſuppoſe, *(and following me at once up ſtairs)* upon my word a pretty girl—come, child, you ſhall go home and dine with me, I have a mind to have a little talk with you. Let me ſee, aye, bring your child with you—come you ſhall go in my chariot now. And ſo you have no friends here—well, no matter for that.

And ſo in ſhe puſhed me with my child in my arms, literally ſpeaking, without letting me ſay one word. I was not diſpleaſed at it, for her countenance was uncommonly good natured, and her talkativeneſs appeared to me very innocent; ſhe lived about a mile out of town, and while we drove thither aſked about a million of queſtions without waiting for one anſwer, and ſpoke five million of ſoliloquies; nor did

her tongue reſt a moment after our arrival at her houſe: but feeling, I ſuppoſe, a little laſſitude of tongue, ſhe asked me to tell her my hiſtory, and to my wonder, was more attentive than I expected her to be. You may ſuppoſe, however, I was cautious enough not to tell her any thing which I thought would through her tattling endanger me with my old enemies. When I had concluded, ſhe poured forth ſuch a volley of ſmall talk that it held the chief part of the remaining day; and among other things, ſhe ſaid,

I can't ſay, child, but you did well not to let Mr. Greaves advance too far. I have heard of him often, you was not ſituated ſo as to liſten to him; if he has any thing to ſay, he may come to me—I will manage for you: as to that matter, and the matter of that, he has a good fortune, and they ſay is well enough, but I ſhall hear what he has to ſay for himſelf—you was in the right not to liſten to him before—but now—

I was quite alarmed at her ideas, and would if poſſible have aſſured her that I would never on any account hear any propoſals from him—but to get in one word was impracticable; ſhe went on.

However, child, you muſt not be in his debt, no no; that would be improper: I will pay

Mrs.

Mrs. Steel all her demands, and order her to return the note to him—you ſhall ſtay with me, I will have a room aired for you—if he has any thing to ſay, let him come to me as to that.

Making any apologies or ſpeeches was quite out of the queſtion, I was a mere puppet play'd upon the wires of her tongue. However ſhe yeſterday ſent and paid Mrs. Steel, and I am fixed with her oddly enough. Her name is Hippſley, ſhe is a widow, without children, and lives genteely upon her jointure eſtate. I cannot help ſuſpecting that ſome little motive for the generoſity of her action to me was the having a companion to talk to: ſhe has a brother who viſits her now and then, and is lately gone; unfortunately he is a mathematician, and finds her clack a moſt terrible interruption to the ſolution of any problem. This piece of intelligence I have gained from her maid, who has lived ſeveral years with her, and by mere dint of hearing is grown in her miſtreſs's company taciturnity itſelf; and found I ſuppoſe ſome little pleaſure in a word or two to me. Now I am ſettled for a time ſo much better than I expected, I write, my dear Kitty, my hiſtory; and ſhall continue I hope a better correſpondent than I have lately been: before I conclude, however, you muſt allow me to return you my

ſincereſt thanks for your moſt obliging preſents; but, my deareſt, you muſt let me inſiſt on your not ſending me any thing more, for if you do I really ſhall not date my letters from any place, that you may not know where to write to me; great as the loſs of your letters would be, I muſt give them up unleſs you promiſe me this.

Adieu, &c.

L. WATSON.

I cannot yet determine to write to Mr. Thomas: I know his kindneſs, and the ſea of troubles he will plunge into for my ſake.

LETTER XXXII.

Sir EDWARD MANSEL to F. MONSON, Eſq.

MY dear friend, I can ſcarcely expreſs the ſtrange plot that I lately diſcovered againſt my life: I have eſcaped unuſual dangers; and all through the affectionate attention of Lady Mary Sion—Aye, of herſelf—different as her behaviour was to me of late, it is even thus—

I wrote you in my laſt the intelligence I received of her ladyſhip being gone off with Benſon,

ſon, and the reſolution I had taken of forſwearing all women. Such was my ſituation, when who ſhould one day make me a viſit but Lady Mary herſelf. I was ſo much ſurprized at ſeeing her that ſhe obſerved it.

You ſtare at ſeeing me here, Sir Edward.

Indeed, madam, it is an honour I had no reaſon to expect. I ſhould have thought Mr. Benſon could have entertained your Ladyſhip much better———

Mr. Benſon! what is it you mean?

The favoured gentleman you have been in the country with—your convenient couſin——.

I ſee you have been deceived, I never heard of ſuch a man. But the motive of my calling on you, is to adviſe you to keep cloſe in your houſe next Tueſday; for if you leave it, you will be aſſaſſinated.

What!

There is a villainous plot againſt your life. Do you know one Captain Jefferſon?

Perfectly well.

What offence you have given him I know not; but the moſt mortal revenge is kindled in his ſoul: he will call on you next Tueſday to perſuade you to go to one Gerrard's, a great cheſs-player, who is confined with the gout: there he will have a band of brother villains ready, you are

to be ſlain, and they all are to ſwear you fell in attempting Jefferſon's life in a paſſion.

Good God! Lady Mary, can this be poſſible.

It is fact. I had ſome diſtant ſuſpicions, which made me eager to be certain: I made an acquaintance with Jefferſon, pretended the utmoſt abhorrence of you, and appeared connected with him in the ſame cordial deſire of revenge. After ſome time I wormed the ſecret from him, gained a copy of their agreement, and here it is, *(drawing a paper from her pocket)* you have now timely notice to ſeize them: I ſaid you ſhould not ſtir from home, but it will be better to go armed, with ſome friends—ſeize all the wretches, and get poſſeſſion of the original of this paper, which Jefferſon doubtleſs will have about him.

A thouſand thanks, my dear Lady Mary, for this mark of your friendſhip. I———

My friendſhip for you, Sir Edward, was always permanent, but you were ever ready to indulge the moſt idle ſuſpicions of me.

I know how much I have been to blame, madam—how much I have injured you—but believe me, my future conduct ſhall ———

Come, let us have a game of cheſs—we have not play'd ſo long that I am afraid I ſhall be nothing in your hands.

This

This action of hers, and the mild and agreeable manner in which ſhe carried herſelf, renewed all my paſſion: ſhe is a valuable woman, Monſon, after all. Her family too is greatly reſpectable: and upon my word ſhe play'd three or four games very tolerably, and will I believe make herſelf nearly a miſtreſs of that noble employment. But this curſed ſcoundrel Jefferſon, the fawning dog is affronted at ſomething, and what a helliſh ſcheme he has hatched in revenge! I ſhall ſpeak to Mr. Crow to ſend his conſtables to ſurround the houſe unperceived, and go myſelf with a friend or two, and immediately ſeize the whole crew.—I will write you the event.

* * *

'Tis done, my friend; Jefferſon and four aſſociates are in priſon, and the fatal paper ſecured; he owned the plot, and was as abject in his diſappointment as he would have been cruel in the ſucceſs. Mr. Crow tells me the evidence is very clear, and there will be no difficulty in puniſhing them. Expect ſoon to hear from me that I am once more high in Lady Mary's good graces: I have no doubt but our former intimacy will be renewed, and I am determined, if it is, to make uſe of the opportunity, and conclude the affair: I would not therefore have you ſurprized, if you was to receive a ſummons to the wedding. In the mean time, farewel.

LETTER XXXIII.

Miſs CHARLTON to the Rev. Mr. THOMAS.

SO unexpected an addreſs as this from one who is a ſtranger to your perſon but not to the humanity of your character, may ſurprize you; but the great intereſt I take in every thing concerning Miſs Watſon, induces me to apply to you among others, for ſome intelligence of her: ſhe has been a long time in the weſt of England, and I fear in great diſtreſs: I have heard nothing from her of ſome months, which much alarms me; and as I think ſhe may poſſibly have written to you, I ſhould be much obliged to you for any information you could give me of her.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble ſervant,

C. CHARLTON.

LETTER XXXIV.

ANSWER.

Ripſted, near Launceſton, Cornwall.

MADAM,

YOur favour was ſent to me hither, where I have been ſome days. Miſs Watſon did write to me as you imagined, and having expreſſed an uncommon eſteem for you, I ſhall give you the particulars I have learned concerning her, as I have no doubt but your affection for ſo good a young lady makes you eager to know every thing that befals her. I find, madam, that the laſt intelligence you received was dated from the houſe of Mrs. Hippſley near Biddeford, where Miſs Watſon had been a day or two; I ſhall therefore give you a narrative of what I have learned concerning her, from that period.

I find Mrs. Hippſley was much bent on bringing Mr. Greaves to formal propoſals of marriage, and had ſome conferences with him about it; but unfortunately ſhe made ſo entire a uſe of the time in talking herſelf, that ſhe gave but little attention to what he replied, and miſtaking ſome diſtant hints of his for an aſſent to what

ſhe

ſhe propoſed, ſhe told Miſs Watſon that ſhe had brought him to the very point ſhe wiſhed for, and that her marriage would quickly enſue: that lady then found it high time to undeceive her, and declared that ſhe would on no account marry Mr. Greaves. This much ſurprized Mrs. Hippſley, who had on all occaſions talked to her ſo inceſſantly that ſhe never gave her the time neceſſary to explain herſelf. But Miſs Watſon's refuſal to marry a man of good fortune ſhe thought ſo extraordinary, that it amazed her; and finding that ſhe perſiſted in her reſolution, ſhe accuſed her of pride and obſtinacy, and grew ſo very cold towards her, that the poor young lady and her little girl, after a fortnight's ſtay with Mrs. Hippſley, left her houſe, and I believe with ſcarce any money for her future ſubſiſtance.

Fearing above all things to meet with Mr. Greaves, ſhe determined to leave that neighbourhood as ſoon as poſſible, and took the opportunity of a carrier's cart to go to Launceſton. On her arrival at that place ſhe ſought a lodging immediately, and with great difficulty found one cheap enough: ſhe then endeavoured to procure work, but in vain, and was neceſſitated to ſpend the laſt ſhilling ſhe had, for bread to ſatisfy her child's and her own hunger: and two days ſhe abſolutely went without a mouthful,

ful, that her little Lucy might have a bare ſufficiency: the woman with whom ſhe lodged diſcovering her extreme poverty told her ſhe muſt leave the lodging, as ſhe could not afford to let it for nothing: this was a miſerable ſtroke to her, but ſhe warded it off by offering to do any material offices for her in her houſe, in conſideration for the lodging: which, with many intreaties, ſhe agreed to, and accordingly this amiable elegant woman immediately entered on all the drugery of the houſe; ſuch as waſhing the floors, cleaning all the utenſils, &c. and her miſtreſs had no mercy on her, but kept her to ſuch very hard labour, that this unfortunate young creature could ſcarce ſupport it; and I verily believe that had it not been for her uncommon affection for her child, which ſupported her under it, ſhe had died under the hands of this unfeeling woman.

In the midſt of this ſituation, who ſhould once more appear to plunge her into freſh diſtreſs but Mr. Greaves: he had traced her to Launceſton, and diſcovering where ſhe lodged, enquired all particulars of her miſtreſs; directed her to deſiſt immediately from employing her in that manner, and to ſupply her with all ſorts of neceſſaries, taking care at the ſame time to keep an account of the ſum, their value, and the amount of her lodgings came to. He accoſted

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coſted her with a great appearance of tenderneſs and affection, but met with ſuch a repulſe as ſurprized him; ſince he could not conceive any woman's virtue could be proof againſt the offers he made her; at leaſt while in ſo low a ſituation. Diſappointed and chagrined at his want of ſucceſs he left her, nor did he return until ſome weeks were elapſed, and when he again alarmed her with his appearance, he changed his manner, and ordering the woman of the houſe to quit the room in which they were, addreſſed the amiable girl in the following manner.

You muſt allow me, Miſs Watſon, without any ceremony, to expoſtulate with you on a certain ſpecies of obſtinacy which I am ſorry to ſay is but too clear in your conduct: here you are, madam, in the loweſt poverty, you have a child to maintain, and yet you are ſo unſeaſonably haughty that you will accept of nothing. I declare moſt ſincerely that I love you extremely, and if you will admit me as your lover, I will place you in a ſtation more worthy of your merit than this beggarly cottage. In ſuch an one that you ſhall no more need taking any names to diſguiſe yourſelf; Mrs. Hippſley informed me who you are.

Leave me this moment, thou inſulting wretch—this beggarly cottage, theſe humble rags—

this

this low condition, are infinitely preferable to the deteſtable offers you make me: No, Sir, I contemn you as much as you deſpiſe my condition.

Not ſatisfied with this anſwer, he proceeded from words to take ſome unwarrantable liberties with her perſon; but the good young woman anſwered them with a furious box on the ear, which put him into a violent rage, and away he went, ſwearing horribly that he would pull down her proud ſtomach.

The next day her miſtreſs, with ſcarce any preamble, demanded payment of a long bill which ſhe put into her hand, the total of which was eleven pounds odd. Startled at ſo unexpected a ſtroke, ſhe denied ever having received any thing like half the ſum: but was anſwered with nothing but—"that is very eaſily ſaid, but I ſhall let you know that you owe me the whole: here is a gentleman that would maintain you well, and through your pride you won't accept it; but let's ſee who elſe will pay me for you. My money, I ſay."—The poor Lucy had nothing to anſwer with but tears and intreaties: ſhe might as well have tried to move a rock: the inexorable woman, who I ſuppoſe called herſelf a chriſtian, immediately put her into the hands of a bailiff, and ſhe was conducted with her little girl by her ſide, to the common gaol.

It cuts me to the ſoul, my dear madam, and I am ſure it will have the ſame effect on you, to think of the miſeries this unfortunate young creature underwent in ſuch a reſidence of filth and diſeaſe—her body emaciated with hunger, and the care ſhe took of her child, and her feeling mind tortured with the moſt cruel reflections. She then determined to write to you and me, and accordingly did; but the villain Greaves took ſuch care to intercept her letters that they never reached either of us. The heartleſs woman that threw her into the loathſome dungeon frequently came to her to ſee if ſhe did not relent as ſhe called it, and agree to accept Mr. Greaves's terms; but meeting with nothing but an abhorrence of them, ſhe abſented herſelf, and the poor Lucy remained three weeks in this wretched ſituation: at the expiration of that term ſhe was releaſed, Greaves having diſcharged the debt, but without letting her know of it, as the perſecuting woman only appeared in it. She walked immediately out of town, without knowing what road ſhe took, and paſſing on 'till ſhe came to a ſmall alehouſe, entered it and laid out two pence in bread, which was her laſt farthing. She diſcloſed ſome part of her melancholy ſtory to the landlord, begging of him to put her in ſome way of earning a ſubſiſtance for herſelf and her little girl: but met with

with no ſatisfactory anſwer. She left the houſe and journied on three miles further, and enquired throughout a village for ſome work of any kind, though of the moſt laborious ſort a woman could perform. A poor cottager ſeeing her diſtreſs aſked her in, and pitied her much, told her the beſt thing ſhe could do would be to go to Juſtice French's for relief, and that he might perhaps paſs her on to her ſettlement. She followed this advice without knowing whether it was good or bad, and being arrived at his houſe, was aſked by the footman if ſhe came on juſtice buſineſs? and anſwering Yes, he was going to ſhow her in, when a ſaſh was thrown up, and a gentleman in an angry tone cried out, "Turn that vagabond away, I'm peſter'd to death with pariſh complaints."—The poor Lucy replied ſhe was come for juſtice.—"A pox on juſtice!" he replied, "turn her away—here, there—there's a halfpenny for you; go, get you gone about your buſineſs." Her hope failing in this manner, ſhe left the houſe, and wandered to another village. Repeated diſappointments had almoſt diſtracted her mind, ſhe had felt the effect of unſatisfied hunger more than once, and found herſelf ſcarce able to move: her little Lucy was ſo fatigued that ſhe could walk but a very little way at a time; in ſhort, ſhe entered an alehouſe to reſt herſelf, but had only

only the juſtice's bounty to purchaſe a morſel of bread : ſhe here thought again of writing to me, as ſhe ſuppoſed her former letter had miſcarried; for had I come or ſent to her, it was a very eaſy thing to trace her from Launceſton ; ſhe begged a ſheet of paper, and the uſe of a pen and ink, and this requeſt was complied with: ſhe directly wrote to me, and as ſhe was told that the poſt-boy went by the door three times a week and generally called for a pot of ale, ſhe might be ſure the letter would be given. She left the houſe, but had not walked far before ſhe felt ſo exceſſive a faintneſs that ſhe reclined herſelf on a bank in the road, to recover the weakneſs of her limbs and the ſwimming in her head: indeed ſhe was taken very ill. Some of the neighbours gathered round her and aſked many queſtions, but ſhe had not ſtrength enough to anſwer them ; ſhe heard one of them ſay, Look ye all, ſhe will be able by and by to go no further, you will ſtand about her here, and keep her from going on—and ſo Dick Hawkins the overſeer will lay it all to our charge : I ſay, ſhe ſhould walk on to t'other ſide the blue poſt, and then you know ſhe won't be in this pariſh. But however, let's go tell the overſeer of it.

A boy was directly diſpatched to him, and on his arrival he was furious in his abuſe of the poor creature for ſtopping in their pariſh: "Come,

"Come, come," ſaid he, "you can walk half a mile further, get up, get up, go." Saying this, he raiſed her up, and finding what inhuman creatures ſhe was amongſt, ſhe exerted all her ſtrength to do as they deſired her. And having accompliſhed it, a boy was diſpatched to the officers of the pariſh.

My heart bleeds, madam, at relating the ſufferings of this moſt patient chriſtian: 'twas the juſt notions of religion ſhe had always imbibed, which could alone tolerably ſupport her under ſuch ſevere afflictions. Unhappy young lady!—But why do I ſay unhappy?—when I know ſo well the treaſure ſhe will find as a reward in another world! Cruel parents! Wha have you to anſwer for!

Your wretched friend, madam, after enduring a torrent of abuſe and unjuſt ſuppoſitions, was with her child laid in a cart (for ſhe could walk no longer) and carried to the pariſh workhouſe, to be kept there till ſhe was able to go to the firſt juſtice's and paſſed to her legal ſettlement. In this place ſhe was intermixed with poor of all kinds, and treated in a very hard manner; but the worſt is yet to come. A pariſh officer entered the room one morning with a carrier, and demanded of her her dear little Lucy———

Good

Good God! for what?

For what!—why, what do you think?—to ſend her off, to be ſure.

Send her where?

Where—to the hoſpital.

What hoſpital?

The foundling hoſpital. There, Jack, that's ſhe, take her.

Juſt heaven! take my child! leave her me. At your peril take her not.

Aye aye, I ſhould be fool indeed, not—why ſure you know better than this! Come to a work-houſe, and not think your child will be ſent away! That's a good joke indeed!—No, no; we ſhall have plague enough to get rid of you, I ſuppoſe! Come, give him the girl.

Give her!—I'd give my life ſooner. Look ye, fellow, I am a gentlewoman born, and will not be ſo cruelly treated. I will not part with my child; no, not for ten thouſand worlds!——

Ha! ha! Yes, to be ſure, a gentlewoman! I wiſh you had pleaſed to have kept yourſelf ſo, and not come to burthen us, we have poor enough of our own. Come, come; the child, I ſay; none of your nonſenſe—*(taking hold of her)*.

Stand off. You ſhall not have her.

Zounds and ſin! what, reſiſt me! I'll have her this moment—*(ſeizing her violently)*

For

For the love of heaven, leave me but my child, whatever you do with me—I'll maintain her; on my ſoul I will. For heaven's ſake——

Stuff—Stuff—*(tearing her from her mother's arms)*

By heavens I will do any thing to keep her—you ſhall be nobly rewarded and that quickly too if you will let me have her.——A gentleman will ſoon be here for me—

Lye—lye—there, Jack, carry her away.

Only one week, for God's ſake, leave her but one week!

By this time the officer and carrier ſhut the door againſt her, and went off with her beloved child; leaving the mother.—Good God, Miſs Charlton—her ſituation I am ſure was paſt all deſcription; by the accounts I can gather of her, ſhe fell, as they thought, dead on the floor, and was really ſome time in a ſwoon, and when ſhe awaked, kept her ſenſes not a quarter of an hour, only ſufficient to ſee her ſituation; ſhe preſently raved as wild as the winds; and was ſick in bed, and void of underſtanding when I found her out. I received her laſt letter, and ſet out immediately for Launceſton, traced her hither, and was with her three days with the beſt phyſical attendance I could get before I ſaw the leaſt dawn of her returning ſenſes; but

ſhe

ſhe conſtantly cried out for her Lucy, in the midſt of her diſorder.

In about another week her illneſs abated, the fever was not ſo violent, and ſhe knew me for a few minutes: but it was three weeks before ſhe could really be ſaid to enjoy her underſtanding enough to give me a diſtinct account of the loſs of her child; for the people had told me ſeveral falſities. She requeſted me to write immediately to London to ſomebody that knew her Lucy to ſeek her out with the moſt unremitting diligence: I had not waited for this, but as ſoon as ever I could get a glimmering of the truth (which was no eaſy matter) I wrote to my wife, and ſorry am I to tell you, madam, that ſhe met with no ſucceſs; but this intelligence I have kept from my unhappy friend: I have repeated my letters to my wife, and pray heaven ſome tidings may be learned of the ſweeteſt child I think I ever beheld.

Nothing could be more unlucky than the circumſtance of the carrier. The man who drove that journey was ſince diſmiſſed from the carrier's ſervice, and has enliſted for a ſoldier, ſo that all diſcoveries by his means are hopeleſs.

I fully expected that a return of the poor lady's ſenſes would bring ſuch cruel reflections to her mind that a freſh fit of raving would return;

turn; but I was miſtaken: ſhe is now in the deadlieſt melancholy, and ſpeaks not a word, but in broken accents, of her grief at the loſs and unknown fate of the daughter ſhe ſo tenderly loved. I tremble at the ſilent ſorrow which broods ſo horribly on her ſoul: her bodily diſtempers are at a ſtand; and what her fate may be, the doctor knows not—but ſhakes his head with apprehenſions. The foregoing circumſtances have fallen from her by fits and ſtarts; but I have connected the whole in this narrative, as I thought you would be beſt pleaſed to learn every thing concerning ſo dear a friend. You may depend on my tenderneſs, madam. nothing ſhall be omitted to reſtore her if poſſible to her health, but I fear the only way to do this will be to reſtore her child: if you could lend your aſſiſtance that way at London, it would be very kind.

I remain, madam, for the preſent, &c.

P. THOMAS.

I will write to you again
in a day or two.

LETTER XXXV.

Miſs CHARLTON to the reverend Mr. THOMAS.

I Received your letter, my good Sir, and ſorry I am to my very heart that your ſubject is ſo wretched. Alas! my dear Lucy! what ſufferings!—That ſuch a woman—that ſuch characteriſtical merit—ſuch virtue and patience ſhould be made ſuch a ſacrifice! I beg of you, Sir, be particular and regular in your letters to me—excuſe this freedom; but I cannot bear the thoughts of being ignorant of any thing concerning my dear unhappy friend. Would to heaven I may be able to diſcover her little girl—what a cutting ſtroke was that! I ſent three truſty meſſengers for that purpoſe, but they are returned without ſucceſs, and with ſuch an utter ignorance of all circumſtances, that I deſpair of it: however, I ſhall not eaſily give it up, and have waited for nothing but to write you this letter.

In caſe Miſs Watſon makes any enquiries about me, pleaſe to tell her, Sir, that I ſtay in London only to be able to ſerve her in ſeeking her child better than I could were I with her; but that I have got my father and mother's conſent to go to her as ſoon as I can either find her

her child, or be convinced that the ſearch is vain: you may likewiſe tell her, Sir, that I in ſome meaſure gained this point in return for becoming more ſenſible than I hitherto have been of the merit of Mr. Hinchley (ſhe will know who I mean) and that Mr. Cary is diſcovered to be a notorious villain. She will directly ſee that I have much to ſay to her on that ſubject, but I defer every thing 'till I have the melancholy ſatisfaction of ſeeing her.

* * *

I deſigned to have ſent this off before, but on ſecond thoughts determined to ſtay till I had been at the foundling hoſpital: I have, Sir, and am exceeding ſorry to tell you that I have heard not the leaſt intelligence of any child that could be Miſs Watſon: I have ſeen them all. From my deſcription, and telling them the time and circumſtances, they were confident ſhe never came, but was carried ſomewhere elſe, or through the villainy of the carrier ſold to ſome road gipſies, or ſome other accident befallen her. I ſhall not yet deſiſt; but am fearful all will be in vain. By the incloſed you will ſee that Mr. and Mrs. Watſon are brought by the death of their ſon to have a better idea of the merit of their daughter: But, good God! if this extorted forgiveneſs ſhould come too late! My dear Lucy is now their only child; and the

heireſs of a noble eſtate, for her brother left no children; but my dear friend, I'll anſwer for it, would value a ſight of her child rather than the poſſeſſion of twenty eſtates. However I wiſh the letter may give her ſome comfort. She may ſoon expect her mother's preſence. Adieu, my worthy Sir, and believe me to be, &c.

C. CHARLTON.

P. S. Sir Edward Manſel was married the other day to Lady Mary Sion, and is already parted from her on the demand of ſome vaſt debts ſhe had contracted, and ſome other curious diſcoveries.

LETTER XXXVI.

RICHARD WATSON Eſq. to Miſs CHARLTON.

(Incloſed in the foregoing)

MADAM,

KNowing that my daughter was once a particular friend of yours, I take the liberty to beg you would trouble yourſelf to inform me where ſhe is at preſent, if you happen to know.

know. She has conducted herſelf ſo very imprudently, that I fear you are totally ignorant of every thing concerning her. Often reflecting on her misfortunes has brought myſelf and her mother to think more favourably of her than it was poſſible we ſhould while ſhe lived with that wretch Sir Edward Manſel; but we are informed ſhe has left him, and are therefore ready to receive her again. If you, by accident, ſhould know where ſhe is, I ſhould be much obliged to you to inform her of theſe favourable ſentiments.

I remain, Madam,

Your obedient humble ſervant,

R. WATSON.

LETTER XXXVII.

ANSWER.

SIR;

I Received your letter, and am ſo far from being ignorant of every thing concerning your excellent daughter, that I am acquainted with every circumſtance relative to her. I eſteem her friendſhip beyond that of any perſon I know, and I could not be ſo intimate with her without admiring much at the rigid ſentiments which

kept her from her parent's houſe: but the miſfortune was yours. She is now in the utmoſt miſery, at the work-houſe in Ripley near Launceſton in Cornwal: ſhe would not be ſo ſituated at preſent, would her health ſuffer a removal; for that pious and humane clergyman (Mr. Thomas) who made you a viſit with deſign to reconcile you to her, but in vain, and *after* ſhe had left Sir Edward, though you intimate an ignorance of that circumſtance 'till now; he, Sir, is with *your* daughter, giving her that attendance and friendſhip which your cruel want of affection denied her, until your ſon was no more—this return of kindneſs ſavours, methinks, of *ſelf* love more than *paternal*.

I remain, &c.

C. CHARLTON.

LETTER XXXVIII.

The Reverend Mr. THOMAS to Miſs CHARLTON.

I Proceed, madam, without any introduction, to continue my unhappy tale, as I think you will like to have quick intelligence of your wretched friend. It was by ſlow degrees that the violence

violence of her diſorder wore off; and as it did, her melancholy I thought encreaſed, and ſhe took ſo little nouriſhment of any ſort, that I trembled for her life. I read her your letter as ſoon as I received it, and her father's at the ſame time: when I had finiſhed yours, leaving out the paſſages that related to her father, ſhe ſaid, Ah! my poor Lucy, never ſhall I ſee you again! My friend, Miſs Charlton, pities me, I am ſure; but all her ſearch will be in vain——

I hope not, madam, I replied; accidents unthought of may bring her to your knowledge again, and no pains will be ſpared, I am ſure.

Such hopes, my valuable friend, are viſionary—No; the wretched work is done. This ſtroke coming on all the other miſerable ones that I have experienced, alas! Mr. Thomas, it is too much! My nature cannot ſupport it.

Come, madam, do not deſpair yet; and here's another letter which will yield you a comfort unexpected. One from your father.

I then read her the other letter, and the obſervations you make on it. It did not affect her as I expected.

This, Mr. Thomas, indeed is unexpected; but of what comfort is it to me. My parents overwhelmed me with miſery—Yes, I muſt, I cannot help avowing it, I owe my ruin to their ſeverity; but bear me witneſs, Mr. Thomas,

that

that I think of their treatment no longer with any reſentment; I ſhall ſpeedily be in my grave, and they will then have the ſatisfaction of forgetting they ever had a daughter that rendered herſelf ſo infamous as I have done: but God forgive me! I have many ſins to repent!

I would have comforted her—and was ſorry to find that ſhe conſidered her parents conduct in ſo juſt a light; but indeed, madam, they are not worthy of ſuch a daughter. She expreſſed herſelf coldly on this ill-tim'd forgiveneſs, and continued to lament the loſs of her dear Lucy. She ſoon after fell again into her ſilent melancholy.

The phyſician that evening told me ſhe was in the utmoſt danger, that I might expect every hour would be her laſt, "For, added he, the exceſſive grief ſhe now ſuffers breaks her heart." Poor Lady, ſhe had deſired the ſacrament to be adminiſtred to her, which I did, and ſhe received it with true devotion.

The next morning I thought her ſomewhat better; ſhe had deſired that I ſhould attend her, and when I entered the room,

My worthy friend, ſaid ſhe, you are come in good time, for I ſhall be with you but a few hours longer.

Heaven forbid, madam, let us hope———

Hope!

Hope! Mr. Thomas, what ſhould I hope? to live? I have had enough of life. From ſix years old to this moment, I have met with nothing but wretchedneſs. Were my days to be ſpun out even to old age, of what would they conſiſt? Truſt me, they would be imbittered with remorſe: the longer I reflect on my unhappy failings, the more miſerable will my fate be in this world: in another——

Aye, madam, never fear, in another world, that Deity ſo juſt! ſo merciful! will there reward you————

Will, I hope, forgive me. Heaven knows how ſincerely I have repented my grand failing. I could not repent it more were I to live for ever, and in that ſentiment I put my truſt. But, my good friend, when I am no more, let me beg of you on the tenderneſs you have had for her unhappy mother, to transfer the kindneſs to the idea of her loſt daughter—that if you ſhould accidentally meet with her, you will be her friend. I cannot flatter myſelf ſo much as to think it will happen, but I am ſure you will at leaſt endeavour to find her.

Comfort yourſelf, madam, you may yet ſee her. Do not deſpair. But if you do not, I aſſure you faithfully, I will never forget her.

Thank you, my good friend: but as to comfort—No, Sir, no ray of ſuch comfort darts in

in upon my wretched mind—never—never, my dear Lucy!—thou ſweet and moſt amiable girl! never ſhall I ſee thee more! Thy miſery is begun, yet ſooner than your mother's! Juſt heaven, in what hands may you be fallen! Oh! Mr. Thomas, the dreadful thought o'erwhelms me. I cannot—I ſink——

She fainted away, and I thought ſhe had died at that moment—but I called for aſſiſtance, and her nurſe brought her to herſelf, and having a little recovered her ſpeech, ſhe began again in broken accents:

Tell my dear Miſs Charlton that I die full of ſentiments of friendſhip for her—and—*(her voice failing ſhe could proceed no further; when ſhe recovered)* and if my parents ſhould think of ſo undutiful—*(here her voice again failed her)* Oh! Mr. Thomas, I cannot ſpeak any more—I have your pity, I dare ſay.—My Lucy! Oh! my Lucy! Alas! Oh! my heart! my heart!——

Theſe were the laſt words which fell from the lips of this unfortunate young creature! I have no ſpirits to write more at preſent——

* * *

Mrs. Watſon arrived here laſt night; the idea of her behaviour to the poor deceaſed gave me ſo bad an impreſſion of her, that I like not

not her company at all; and am now going to ſet out on my return home.

This intelligence, I apprehend, will ſtop your journey, madam: all I can add to this melancholy narrative, is an aſſurance to you the friend of the unhappy lady, that I will never omit any opportunity of diſcovering her daughter—and I am very certain you likewiſe will not forget her: nothing, however, but the moſt unexpected and improbable accidents can effect it: I have not the leaſt idea of ſucceſs.

I remain, &c.

P. THOMAS.

FINIS.

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